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INTERNATIONAL

APRIL 1990

INSIDE

Shipping Crisis

FLEETWAY / Amnesty
title held at docks
to help Death Row
Africans 9

Dredd & Batman



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\$80,000 paid for first Batman comic

THE SAME near mint copy of **Detective Comics 27** which sold for \$35,000 two years ago has been resold for \$80,000.

This record-breaking sale of the 1939 comic book which introduced Batman was made by Brooklyn's Metropolis Comics. The company's owner Stephen Fishler told **Comics International**, "I don't believe \$80,000 is a lot of money for a **Detective 27** in that condition. It just takes time for people to get used to it."

It is generally accepted that the Edgar Church 1940s comics collection (better known as the 'Mile High' collection because of its quantity) contains the best grade copies is existence. But Fishler knows otherwise.

"The reason it sold for so much is that this **Detective 27** is nicer than the Mile High copy, which is only in Fine condition. But the person who bought it from me already owns the Mile High **Detective 27** and just wanted to upgrade it."

This anonymous private collector who paid in cash also owns the Mile High **Batman 1**, which was published

a year after **Detective 27** in 1940, and **Action Comics 1**, which introduced Superman in 1939.

Now he owns two high grade copies of this extremely rare landmark comic, would the collector be selling his lesser grade copy?

"No, he's keeping both," Fishler told us.

This was the second time in two years the comic had passed through Metropolis Comics. Fishler had sold it only two years ago for \$35,000. It had been part of a collection known as The Allentown Collection which Fishler and James Payette had bought.

The comics had been in the possession of the original owner since the early 1940s and included extremely good condition copies of **Detective 27-38**, **Batman 1-6** and **Marvel Comics 1**, which introduced The Human Torch and Sub-Mariner in 1939.

Fishler said he sold the **Detective 27** immediately to one of his customers,



Comics' big spenders...7

and has made several attempts over the next two years to buy it back.

According to **The Official Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide**, it is the only known copy in existence in better than Very Fine to Near Mint condition.

The 1988 buyer finally agreed to sell. Fishler told us, "Let's just say that the price paid was a record buying price. I paid more for that than anybody's ever paid for a comic book."

That was on February 22nd, 1990. Fishler sold it the next day for \$80,000.

"The seller was happy, the buyer was happy and I'm happy. We're all one big happy family," he added.

"It was quite a sale."

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NEWS america

The Demon & Shade return

The British invasion of DC and its characters continues apace.

Alan Grant, who re-established Jack Kirby's **Demon** in the ill-fated **Action Comics Weekly** and more recently in **Detective Comics**, is doing it once more.

The Demon is now a regular monthly \$1.50 title in which Etrigan, under Grant's pen, is an evil demon who both enjoys and abuses his dark powers.

Grant takes the opportunity to bring back many of the supporting characters of his previous scripts, with Jason Blood continuing to suffer as Etrigan's host body.

Batman is marked in for a reciprocal guest appearance in issue 3.

Shade, the Changing Man,



Steve Ditko's DC creation of 1977 and victim to the DC Implosion also re-acquires his own title, courtesy of Pete Milligan, best remembered for his stirring **Mask** scripts and his lesser known **Bad Company** and **Skreemer**.

Invariably, writers have found it difficult to handle Ditko's concepts successfully, coping with both the bizarre and the fascist. But it is

Judge Dredd and Batman project



(C) Fleetway Publications, 1990

2000AD'S LEGENDARY law enforcer, Judge Dredd, has become an industry landmark, rivalling Batman, Superman and Spider-Man both in popularity and public recognition.

His international appeal has been such that he almost starred as a First Comics character, but ended up in Eagle Comics, with First substituting **American Flag**.

Following his Eagle run, he was intended to become part of the DC American output, but negotiations never got off the ground, and the UK-Spanish reprint line replaced Eagle Comics as a licencing venture.

Most Judge Dredd artists and writers found their way into the DC stable, so the oft-postponed team-up was inevitable.

Judge Dredd meets Batman. This time it looks definite.

Once rumoured to be handled by Alan Moore and Brian Bolland, the plot was to involve Batman warping into the future of Mega-City 1, and first meeting Dredd when the law-enforcer pulled the Batmobile over for traffic violation . . . moving too slowly in a 300mph minimum zone.

Rumours abounded, not the least being a certain dis-satisfaction on the part

of Dredd writers who quite reasonably felt they didn't want others tampering with their character.

Despite an impassioned plea by Brian Bolland in the American fan press, urging readers to lobby Dredd publishers for the title to be put back on the schedules, nothing happened.

Perhaps it was the old management's uncertainty about their proposed US partners, but whatever the reason, the project was called off.

Hearing the project was once again at planning stages, **Comics International** spoke to Dredd-writer John Wagner.

"The new (Fleetway) regime was more open to it. It will be a co-production between them and DC Comics.

Simon Bisley will be drawing it with Alan Grant and me writing it."

Obviously ideal for scripting, both John Wagner and Alan Grant have been responsible for the Dredd scripts since the series began in 1977, and more recently they took on the script assignment for Batman in **Detective Comics**, with Alan Grant now the regular series writer.

The book will be produced as a 64 page colour graphic novel and is expected to be in the shops at Christmas. ■

anticipated that Milligan, whose 6 part **Johnny Nemo** series for Eclipse was rapidly cut to a 3-part mini-series when Cat Yronwode saw his full outline, is the right man for the job.

Milligan picks up the original Ditko outline, with alien Rac Shade being from the other dimensional world of Meta. Meta is separated from Earth by the Zero Zone and the Area of Madness.

In the first issue Shade, possessor of a vest which

allows him to appear to change shape at will, finds himself inhabiting the body of a killer on death row, at the time of his execution.

The sentence goes through, but the body refuses to die, with Shade in residence. The Metans are out to unleash madness on Earth, and Shade is powerless to stop them.

This on-going monthly series is 48 pages, at \$2.50 and has a Brendan McCarthy painted cover. ■

New Carl Barks Donald Duck story discovered

AN AMAZING discovery has led Disney Comics Editor-in-Chief Len Wein to be able to present a true celebration in **Walt Disney's Comics & Stories** issue 550, the third issue under the new company imprint (full story on page 6).

The anniversary issue of the first regularly published Disney comic which began in 1940 will be a double size 48-page issue containing a previously unseen English-language strip by the late Carl Barks.

Len told **Comics International**, "It's quite incredible. This story hadn't appeared in any of the American Disney comics, not even in the deluxe hardback editions. "It was drawn

for Europe and appeared in Holland, I think, in the mid-1970s."

Barks, world-renowned for his Donald Duck work, first drew for Disney in **Walt Disney Comics and Stories** in 1943, when, in issue 31, the first original comic book Donald Duck story appeared after several years of reprints.

It was Barks who later went on to create Uncle Scrooge and continued as principal writer/artist for the Donald strip for the next 25 years until his retirement in 1966.

In all he wrote over 500 stories during his career.

Cover price on **Walt Disney Comics & Stories** 550 has yet to be set.

IN BRIEF

THE ORIGINAL DICK TRACY

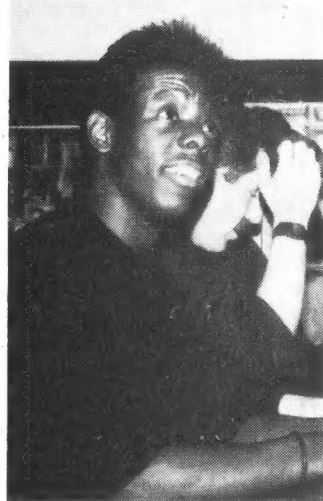
WHILE WE MAY be about to be deluged in **Dick Tracy** merchandise to accompany the imminent film release, some items are worth looking for.

The Original Dick Tracy is a new bi-monthly Gladstone series.

Full colour, with 64 pages for \$1.95 this bargain package reprints the best of Chester Gould's classic strips with the first issue featuring the complete 1943 story, "Dick Tracy vs Mrs Pruneface".

On sale late May.

BRITON ON THE AMERICAN



First we had that true-blue symbol of the States **Captain America** in the hands of British artists, when Alan Davis and Paul Neary teamed up for Marvel. Now **Dark Horse's The American** is in the hands of a Brit!

Doug Braithwaite takes on the Verheiden script for **The American Special**, which makes an appearance to tie up the loose ends left from the first series.

Though this is Doug's first exposure in American comics, his work has been seen in a wide range of British titles.

His credits include **Judge Dredd** for Fleetway, Marvel's **Real Ghostbusters** and **Galaxy Rangers** and "Elephant's Garveyard" in the second issue of **Atomika's A1**.

As well as continuing to contribute to **A1**, he now has a major set of US assignments.

For DC he will be drawing an issue of **Doom Patrol**

and the **Legion of Superheroes** annual. He has also agreed to be the regular artist on **Dark Horse's The American** when it returns to regular scheduling in the near future.

RETURN OF THE JOKER

MAKING HIS first appearance since the murder of Jason Todd in the much-hyped "Death of Robin" series, the Joker returns to face Batman in a three part series.

Beginning in **Batman** 450, by Marv Wolfman, Jim Aparo and Mike DeCarlo, the story continues in **Detective** 617 (Grant, Breyfogle & Mitchell) and concludes two weeks later in **Batman** 451, on summer fortnightly frequency.

The series is aptly titled "Return of the Joker".

COMICS GREATS

Packaged under the inspired title of **Buried Treasure**, Caliber has certainly hit the mother lode. Issue 2, due in May, features the following nuggets:

"Lockjaw the Alligator" by Jack Kirby; "Cat's Death" by Joe Kubert; "Captain Science and the Insidious Dr Khartoum" by Joe Orlando and Wally Wood, all wrapped up in a Captain Science cover by Orlando and Wood. Sadly it is in black and white, but at \$2.50 for 48 pages, it's a reasonably priced package.

BUSCEMA'S EARLY WORK

JOHN BUSCEMA fans wanting to see the gentle giant's early work should check out AC's May on sale title, **Roy Rogers Western** which reprints 1950s Buscema in full colour. Issue 1 should be in the shops this month with a second issue scheduled for May.

HAWKAAARGH!

GOING DOWN FOR the fifth time, DC's **Blackhawk** bites the dust once more.

The final issue, number 16, is by replacement scripter Doug Moench and regular artist since the **Action Comics Weekly** series, Tim Burchett.

HARVEY PEKAR

THE EVER excellent **American Splendor** annual event is going to press this month.

Expect to see issue 15, featuring Harvey's stories drawn by Gary Dumm, Joe Zabel, Mark Zingarelli, Chester Brown, Frank Stack, Bob Stack and Rick Taylor.

Batman Archives

FOLLOWING THE success of last year's hardback reprinting of **Superman** 1 - 4, DC are now releasing **The Batman Archives**.

At \$39.95 this companion to the **Superman Archives** is standard comic book size, full colour and runs to 306 pages.

Reprinting **Detective** 27 - 50 Batman stories it represents the first two years of Batman's adventures

and includes the origin and first appearance of Robin, The Joker, Clayface and Hugo Strange.

Covers of all featured issues are also reprinted, and the introduction is by ex-Epic editor and comics historian Rick Marschall.

DC advise that this edition will not be reprinted as a lower price paperback, but may go to reprint if warranted.

'60s greats

FANS OF SILVER age artists should feel very happy this year. As well as the Gladstone EC reprints (see feature on page 6) and the already mentioned **Buried Treasure** title, Major Magazines have gathered together the talents of John Severin, Gene Colan, Steve Ditko and Pat Boyette for **Monsters Attack**.

Major Magazines has a long history of publishing top comics talent, going back to the Fifties, but generally they have been overlooked.

It was in February 1958 that Major moved into comics when they published a competitor to EC's **Mad Magazine** in the form of **Cracked**.

Contributions were provided by Al Williamson, Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, John Severin, Jack Davis, Bill Elder, Basil Wolverton, Gray Morrow and a host more.

Launched as an American newsstand-only title, **Monsters Attack** is now being marketed at the direct sale outlets and issues 2 and 3 should be appearing next month.

At the bizarre cover price of \$1.49, issue two features a John Severin 'Freddy Krueger' cover and strips by Morrow, Ditko and the pseudonymously credited 'Madman'. Features are on the **Mars Attack** craze and the **Elm Street** movies.

Issue 3, at \$2.25 contains strips by Severin, Colan, Ditko and Boyette.

Don't let the title put you off, give it a second look.

FIRST NEW PUBLISHER OF THE 1990s

Disney Comics 8 new titles

THE FIRST brand new comics publishing company of the decade is also one of the oldest established names in comics history.

Disney comics titles have been a major part of American comic books since their inception, with 1940 and 1941 **Donald Duck** and **Mickey Mouse** titles demanding as high a price as £2000 in mint condition.

But Disney comic book titles were published under licence by Dell Comics throughout the 'forties, 'fifties and 'sixties. Dell Comics owner Western Publishing Company Inc changed its publishing name to Gold Key (in a complex arrangement concerning one party having owned the rights and another the wherewithall to actually publish), and then to Whitman in the 1960s and 1970s, but continued the Disney line through to 1984. By this time, poor sales over all titles led to Western dropping their entire comics line.

Following the popularity of their large-format hard-back licenced Disney archive reprints, direct-sale publisher Gladstone acquired the rights to start up their own comic book Disney line in 1986. The Gladstone Disney comics continued the series and numbering from Western until the shock announcement late last year that Disney were pulling back the rights.

Gladstone had in its four years achieved an excellent end-product and picked up a strong fan following, although rumours of dissatisfaction on the part of the creators began to circulate during late 1989.

While page rates had been far below DC and Marvel, artists had been able to boost their income by selling their originals to collectors.

Disney put a stop to that, claiming that the artists had no right or licence to sell material bearing the closely guarded images of Donald, Mickey and friends.

Before the full repercussions of this setback could be felt, Disney pulled

in their publishing agreement.

Ex-Marvel and DC top writer/editor Len Wein took the hot seat appointment as Disney's editor-in-chief in their Burbank California offices and settled into establishing Disney's own first-ever comics publishing structure.

The end-product is that eight Disney comic book titles will be on sale this April, two titles each week, with only two continuing the old numbering.

Wein and Disney feel this will give new fans the opportunity to start their Disney collections from first issues, while the longer established **Walt Disney's Comics & Stories** (October, 1940) and **Uncle Scrooge** (March, 1952) acknowledge their history by picking up the numbering which had been continued by all prior publishers.

Of the eight titles, seven are traditional Disney fare, with only **Roger Rabbit** being the new recruit, continuing its toons in reality movie theme.

The eight titles, all 32 pages, offset printed, and priced at \$1.50 are as follows:

Chip 'n' Dale Rescue Rangers No. 1. All new material by Scott Saavedra (story) and H. Saavedra + R. Valenti (art). Part one of a 2-issue Rangers origin story.

Donald Duck Adventures No. 1. has two new stories by Don Rosa ("The Money Pit") and "The Vintage Vandal" by Dave Angus (script) and Santanach (art).

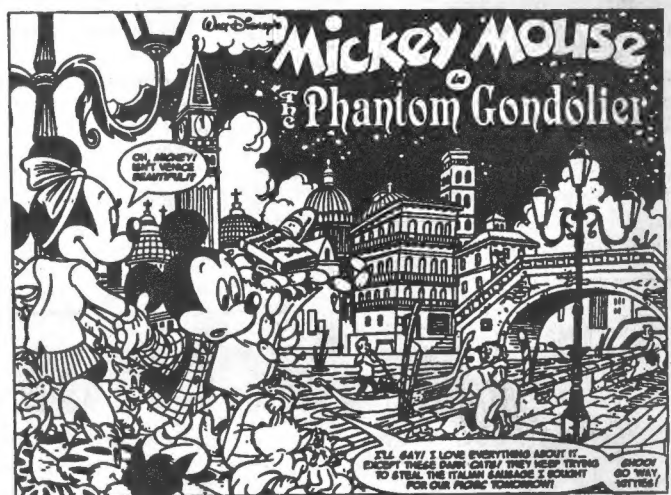
Duck Tales No. 1. Two all-new stories, both by Marv Wolfman (script) and Cosme Quartieri + the Jamie Diaz studio (art).

Goofy Adventures No.1. Two new stories; "Balboa de Goofy" by Mike Kazaleh (script) and Rick Hoover (art). "Goofy Frankenstein" by Greg Crosby (script) and Hector de Urriaga + Nestor Torreiro (art).

Mickey Mouse Adventures No. 1. One new story by Michael T. Gilbert (script) and Stephen DeStephano



"The Money Pit" from **Donald Duck** 1. Script + art by Don Rosa



"The Phantom Gondolier" from **Mickey Mouse** 1 by Michael T. Gilbert (script) and Stephen de Stefano with Gary Martin (art)



"Trouble With Toons" from **Roger Rabbit** 1. Script by Kate Worley, art by Rick Hoberg.

+ Gary Martin (art). Reprints being "The Adventures of the Silver Parrot" (from **Mickey Mouse** 45) and "Shark Bait" (from **Mickey Mouse**

73).

Roger Rabbit No. 1. Two new stories behind a Rick Hoberg & Steve Leialoha cover: "The Trouble with

(c) The Walt Disney Co., 1990

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(c) The Walt Disney Co., 1990

"Toons" by Kate Worley (script) and Rick Hoberg (art) featuring a "tough, no-nonsense detective in the tradition of the Bob Hoskins movie character. "Good Neighbor Roger" by Doug Rick (script) and Richard Chidlaw + Bill Langley (art) features Roger-hating weasels moving in next door.

Uncle Scrooge No. 243. Two new stories by writers Bill Riling and Jack Sutter, plus artists William Van Horn and Vicar.

Walt Disney's Comics & Stories No. 548. Four story anthology title; "Home is the Hero" by Les Lilley (script) and Vicar (art) features Donald Duck. "My Cousin, The Expert" by George Beal (script) and Ramos (art) features Li'l Bad Wolf. "Risky Realms" by Joel Katz and Jack Sutter (script) and Ramos (art) stars Br'er Rabbit. "The Hotel for Animals" by Les Lilley (script) and Fernandez (art) features Grandma Duck and Gus Goose. ■

Disney Comics Movie & TV adaptations

ONE ADVANTAGE to Disney now publishing its own material is its ability to tie-in with material currently coming out of the Disney tv and movie studios.

An early example of such is the **Dick Tracy** three issue graphic novel series, the first part of which went on sale this month, with the second, **Dick Tracy vs. the Underworld**, shipping in April.

Apparently the family of **Dick Tracy** creator Chester Gould feel Kyle Baker's art on the mini-series is a "great contradiction" to the creator's work. While that may be the case, Baker is known for his unique approach to comics, one can only hope that in receiving income from the June release **Dick Tracy** movie starring Warren Beatty, Madonna and Al Pacino, the Gould family will find some solace.

Disney's further plans in the comic book world include adaptations of upcoming movies **The Little Mermaid** and Steven Spielberg's **Arachnophobia**. ■

Availability of classic British art to Disney Comics

IN PRODUCING their own colour comics in America, Disney has chosen to use a large proportion of new material.

In fact their eight new monthlies mention only two reprint stories, both in **Mickey Mouse**.

But on closer examination of their credits, two English writers' names appear in **Walt Disney's Comics & Stories**. Both George Beal and Les Lilley have never written for Disney America.

Instead, the two were part of the creative team for the European Disney syndicate of the 1970s and 1980s, often writing as many as fifty pages a month each.

While Disney's popularity had waned in Britain and America over the last two decades, it remained strong in Europe.

Danish publishing giant Gutenberghus had been commissioning massive quantities of Disney licenced work from writers and artists throughout Europe.

Comics International spoke to Preben Boyer of

Gutenberghus who told us, "Just after the war, our company became very friendly with the Disney family, and we acquired Scandinavian rights to their comics material."

"Later on we added the rights for Germany, Austria and Switzerland."

Britain already had Disney licencees from the early 1930s. Publishers Dean & Son produced **Mickey Mouse** hardback annuals from 1931 to 1965, and Odhams Press published **Mickey Mouse Weekly** from 1936 to 1957.

IPC Magazines continued with Disney material in the 'sixties and 'seventies in **Disneyland**, the **Look & Learn** style Disney educational nursery weekly **Now I Know**, and **Donald & Mickey**.

But when IPC ceased their Disney line, Gutenberghus acquired British rights for their subsidiary, London Editions.

"We now have added East Europe to our licenced territories," Preben Boyer went

on. "So we have had to create a great deal of new material."

In fact their volume of origination is such that they are possibly the largest creator of Disney stories in the world.

Which, because of the structure of the Disney licences, makes a vast archive of material available to Disney's US editor-in-chief Len Wein.

Licencees are obliged to submit all originated material for Burbank approval, to keep the Disney feel consistent across the world.

Once approved, the work goes into a 'global pool', allowing a free flow of art between Disney publishers around the world.

Given Len Wein's obvious awareness of European material with his inclusion of such in month one, there is a hope of true gems resurfacing.

Work by such innovative talent as the late Frank Bellamy and Ron Embleton for **Mickey Mouse Weekly** and **Disneyland** deserves a second viewing. ■

Written, drawn and sold by Todd McFarlane

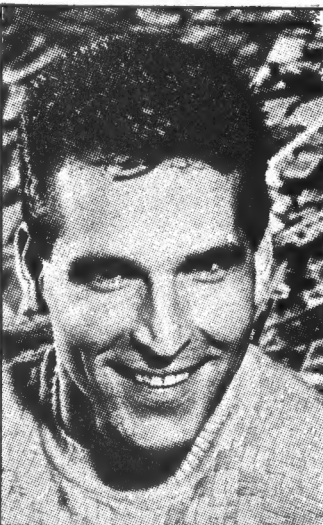
ENTREPRENEURIAL SOUL Todd McFarlane has a second string to his bow. As well as being considered one of the hottest properties in comics for his work on Marvel's **Spider-Man** and **Hulk** titles, he has a secondary income as co-owner of a Washington comics store.

As the last of their six new Spring titles, Marvel are launching a fifth monthly **Spider-Man** comic, being written and drawn by Todd McFarlane.

Marvel's existing titles being **The Amazing Spider-Man**, **Spectacular Spider-Man**, **Web of Spider-Man** and **Marvel Tales** starring (you need to be told?) **Spider-Man**. This new monthly will simply be titled **Spider-Man**.

McFarlane, who will now be directing all of his comics creation time to this new title, has hit on a launch

promotion which will not only benefit the comic,



but also his own retail outlet, and its mail order spin-off. He is autographing a supply of the first issue.

In an interview with Maggie Thompson for the March 9 issue of the American weekly **Comics Buyer's Guide**, McFarlane said, "I'm trying to get the special copies distributed across the country, and I'm trying to cut back on my travelling time. This way collectors don't have to wait in line to get them."

"We're getting the product to smaller cities that can't afford to put on a con and have me as a guest. Maybe that's ego," he added.

Ego or not, McFarlane's use of his position to promote his shop and receive the profit of a presumed to be considerable number of **Spider-Man** comics (which retail at \$1.75) could be called entrepreneurial.

But other retailers attempting to sell the same comic would doubtless have more colourful ways of describing it. ■

Marvel's Mutant Annuals: 'Days of Future Present'

THE MUTANT annual cross-over from Marvel this year will be in the shops in May, so start saving.

Taking its title and premise from the classic **X-Men** 141 & 142 "Days of Future Past", Chris Claremont and Walt & Louise Simonson share scripting duties on "Days of Future Present".

The story starts in **Fantastic Four** Annual 23 (by Walt Simonson and Jackson Guice). The adult son of Reed and Sue Richards, Franklin, travels back from the grim Sentinel controlled future as portrayed in the earlier **X-Men** stories. He tracks down Rachel to inform her that her presence in our time has not prevented his deadly future time line from happening.

Franklin's appearance as a fully grown man stuns his parents, who learn the ultimate fate of super-humans.

John Byrne supplies cover art on this \$2.00 title.

The story picks up in **X-Factor** Annual 5 by Louise

Simonson and Peter Bogdanove. The FF guest star, together with Excaliber's Phoenix as X-Factor get drawn into the events and Jean Grey finally meets her "daughter" Rachel.

Part 3 appears in **The New Mutants Annual** 6 (by Louise Simonson, Terry Shoemaker and Hilary Barta). The New Mutants get a brief glimpse of their grim future and have to deal with the Sentinel sleeper Ahab, who has a strange connection to their leader Cable.

The final part of "Days of Future Present" appears in **X-Men Annual** 14 (by Chris Claremont and Art Adams). All the characters of the previous linked annuals guest star, The Fantastic Four, The New Mutants and X-Factor with Excaliber's Phoenix.

All four titles will be on sale in May at \$2.00 each. Ah, for the days when one annual had several stories instead of the current trend for several annuals to have only one story. ■

Next from Gladstone: Vault of Horror

WITHOUT DOUBT the best value comic of the year has to be Gladstone's May shipping **Weird Science** 1.

On a remarkably quick recovery from losing their licence to continue with a line of Disney titles, Gladstone has gone from humour to horror and revived the 1950s EC classics.

Unlike previous reprints at prices only wealthy fans of the fifties could afford, this series is within everybody's reach at \$1.95 for 64 colour pages.

Eact Coast Comics made an attempt to bring back the EC classics as standard colour comic books in 1972 but, without the benefit of a direct sales market quickly folded after ten issues.

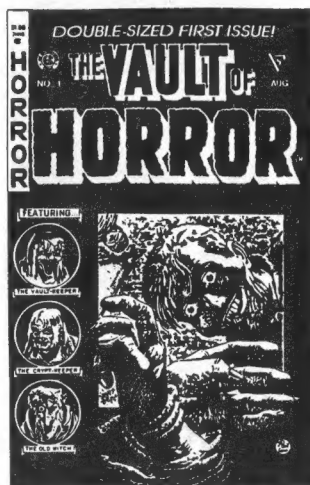
Gladstone's **Weird Science** 1 is the company's third EC title and reprints both **Weird Science** 22 and **Weird Fantasy** 13 in one issue.

Features include the brilliant "A New Beginning" by Al Williamson and an

adaptation of Ray Bradbury's "Outcast of the Stars" by Joe Orlando.

Other reprints feature art by Wally Wood, George Evans, Al Feldstein, Jack Kamen and Harvey Kurtzman.

A must for all serious comics fans with a sense of history. ■



Gladstone's April 64-page **Vault of Horror** 1, \$1.95.

IN BRIEF

DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

TYING IN WITH this year's mutant annuals, Marvel have reprinted the "Days of Future Past" trade paperback, reprinting the **X-Men** 141 and 142 story by Chris Claremont, John Byrne and Terry Austin. 48 colour pages, standard comic book size, with a Jackson Guice cover it retails at \$4.95.

If you missed them, Marvel have also reprinted the **X-Men in the Savage Land** and **X-Men: Asgardian Wars** trade paperbacks at \$9.95 and \$14.95 respectively.

INCREDIBLE HULK VERSUS WOLVERINE

THE HULK 180-181 introduction of Wolverine story has been repackaged again. More expensive with each reprinting, this at-the-time throwaway and now landmark first appearance would have cost you 50¢ (or 12p) for the pair in 1974.

The 1986 one-shot reprinting the two issues would have cost you \$2.00.

But if you missed both versions, you can expect to pay \$4.95 for this 48-page trade paperback version.

Bob Overstreet's **Comic Book Price Guide** puts the 1986 edition at \$5 in mint, while the **UK Price Guide** values it at £1.60.

Marvel refer to the originals being highly sought-after in their publicity, but fail to mention their previous reprint's value.

HE WHO WIELDS THE POWER COSMIC

SILVER SURFER: The Enslavers is a new hardback graphic novel from Marvel, retailing at \$16.95 for 64 colour comic book size pages.

Written by Stan Lee and drawn by Pollard & Rubenstein, it guest stars most major Marvel heroes and introduces space tyrant Mrrungo Mu and his Enslavers.

The villains take the Earth and its population hostage, and only the Silver Surfer, with the help of a human scientist, can free them.

Unseen, it is impossible to say whether the story and art warrant the deluxe hardback expensive format, but it sounds suspiciously like another rock 'em and sock 'em standard storyline to us.

MARVEL POSTERS

MARVEL PRESS has a new range of posters being printed right now.

The fifth Wolverine poster is taken from Howard Chaykin's **The Scorpio Connection** graphic novel.

The third She-Hulk poster is an all-new design by Joe Chiodo.

The third Moebius poster is taken from **Major Grubert of the Airtight Garage**.

Simon & Kirby's classic cover to **Captain America** 1 with Cap punching Hitler completes the range.

All four are retailing at \$4.95 each.

MORE MARVEL MERCHANDISE

IF YOU'RE a true **X-Men** fan, there are two new items from Marvel's own in-house merchandising department which should be in this country late May - early June.

The **X-Men** baseball cap is white with the round X-Men belt buckle logo centre featured.

That means a black X in a yellow circle for those not in the know.

With adjustable snap strap, this item of headgear costs \$6.95.

The Wolverine T-shirt, with new design by Art Adams is 100% cotton and costs \$12.95 for all sizes.

DEATHLOK LIVES!

A CHARACTER who failed to attract a large enough audience in his standard format 1974 series is back in a \$3.95 mini-series.

Deathlok is a new 4-part bookshelf format 48 page adventure, courtesy of scripts by McDuffie and Wright.

Art on the first two issues is provided by Jackson Guice, with the final two issues by Denys Cowan.

No explanation has been offered about scheduling a mini-series with an abrupt change of artist mid-way, but it should lead to an interesting visual readjustment.

NIGHTBREED

REACTION TO the all-British produced **Nightbreed** miniseries has been strong enough for it to continue on a regular basis.

The original four part adaptation of Clive Barker's movie is by John Wagner & Alan Grant, with art by fellow Scot Jim Baikie.

The series continues as a bi-monthly at \$1.95 featuring new adventures of the breed. ■

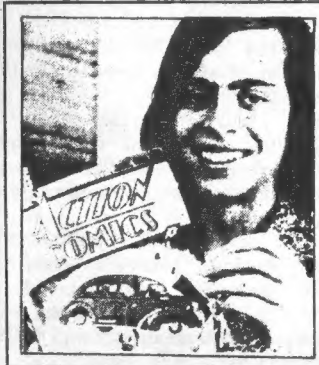
COMICS economics

ONE OF THE instantly acceptable aspects of comics collecting to the outside world can be summed up in a word. Investment.

Before the media featured comics stories as worthwhile news, they always ran headings of the 'Bam! Pow! Holy Sound Effects!' variety. Except when they were talking about money.

Around 1970, Bob Overstreet and Bruce Hamilton bought a copy of **Action Comics** 1 for \$1000. The media and fandom went absolutely crazy.

Late 1973, Mitchell Mehdy proclaimed himself "King of Comics" to the media when he paid \$1801.26 to



buy **Action 1** from Bruce Hamilton. The January 1984 issue of *Esquire* magazine chose to hand Mehdy their "Dubious Achievement Award" for his actions. Again, fandom went crazy with people complaining that his record purchase price had over-inflated an already overpriced market.

The *Sun* newspaper had a "Pacesetters Laugh Week" in January 1974, and gave a page a day over to comics. The feature which attracted most attention being 'How To Cash In On Your Oldies'. Mail poured in, over 1000 *Sun* readers hoping they were owners of rare items. Three were.

Even United Press International (UPI) had got in on the act. They ran a wire story on January 5, 1974 saying that a San Francisco comic art shop was offering a copy of **Detective Comics** 27 for "about \$2000".

To save you rushing to your Price Guides, current value of **Action Comics** 1 is \$13,800 in Fine and \$30,000 in Very Fine to

Near Mint. **Detective Comics** 27 has, as reported, just sold for \$80,000.

"IT'S ALL RELATIVE"

Robert Fishler, who made the record-breaking sale, takes up the story, "Prices are all relative. If you buy something today, 1990, for what is considered a lot of money, people go crazy, like it's the end of the world. But in a year or two they say, 'Yeah, that's what it's worth.'"

"But there is obviously such a thing as paying too much for non-quality books. But if you're buying quality, you're safe."

"People have to get used to comic books as a legitimate and collectable investment."

While Fishler's sale of **Detective Comics** 27 is a record cash deal, it does not break the (known) record for a single comic sale.

The Edgar Church/Mile High copy of **Marvel Comics** 1 was included in a trade off transaction in 1989, and valued at \$110,00 (around £70,000).

THE VALUE OF PRICE GUIDES

Comics International asked Fishler whether the existence of price guides was damaging, causing lower price dealers to inflate their prices to match guides, thus increasing the 'average value' when researched for following years' guides.

An adviser on the internationally accepted **Official Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide** which is now its 19th year, Fishler told us, "It can. There are certain comics dealers who deliberately gear the market up. Some will even price higher in December than April of the same year. It isn't necessarily an annual price increase."

"Other dealers price exactly at guide, but only for certain items where the Guide is appropriate."

"For high demand quality books, the Guide actually follows the market demand, the market doesn't follow the Guide."

We asked if publicising high price sales makes life tougher for dealers trying to buy old comics.

"Yes, you're right," he replied. "If a **Detective**

27 sells for \$80,000, people automatically think 'Well, if that's worth \$80,000, my copy's got to be worth \$50,000'. But their copy might only be worth \$10,000."

"There's that automatic leap, and people become really unreasonable if they think that all copies of **Detective** 27 are worth that much. They think I'm going to make a fortune. But I considered that copy to be practically mint. If that's worth \$80,000, a Fine copy is probably worth only 20% of that."

So Fishler sees an increasingly marked price gap in different grades? "Sure, on real quality titles. There are so few copies. I mean, there's no such thing as a copy of, say, **Superman** 1 in unrestored high grade. It doesn't exist."

RESTORED COMICS

So how do you grade a

restored copy?

"Here's how it should be. If a book looks Fine, but it's been restored, it's worth no more than a VG copy, at best. I've seen books that look nice, but then on closer inspection you can see someone's done a lot of work on it, usually a lot of spine work."

"I think as time goes on people will be more particular about restored copies. There will be some restoration, like replacing the staples, that will totally destroy the value."

So, with new American and British Price Guides about to be published, let's all look forward to seeing how our caches of collectables have increased in average value. ■

Feature by
Dez Skinn

NEXT MONTH *Comics Economics* will be taking a look at how to actually realise your investment and how to get the best deal.



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NEWS

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Revolving rights

FLEETWAY IS breaking new ground in the UK, allowing its creators to retain copyright on work appearing in their new monthly title, **Revolver**, edited by ex-Eel Pie editor, Peter Hogan.

Debuting in May **Revolver** is a 48-page full colour comic, price £1.60, starring an updated version of Dan Dare by Grant Morrison and Rian Hughes. Grant having made his previous biggest impact with his scripting of **Arkham Asylum**, and Rian being best known for his work on **Science Service**.

"It's a parallel universe to the regular Dare," says Fleetway. "It speculates what would happen if Dan Dare's future developed within Thatcher's Britain."

Revolver will also feature "Purple Daze" by rock-mag writer Charles Shar Murray and artist Floyd Hughes. Inspired by the life of Jimi Hendrix, Fleetway proudly point out that Shar Murray's recent Hendrix biography **Crosstown Traffic** has been hailed as a definitive work. Rounding out the package is demon duo Brendan McCarthy and Pete Milligan with **Rogan Gosh**, a nocturnal exploit involving the consumption of curry.

Further feature pages will be provided by Jamie Hewlett.

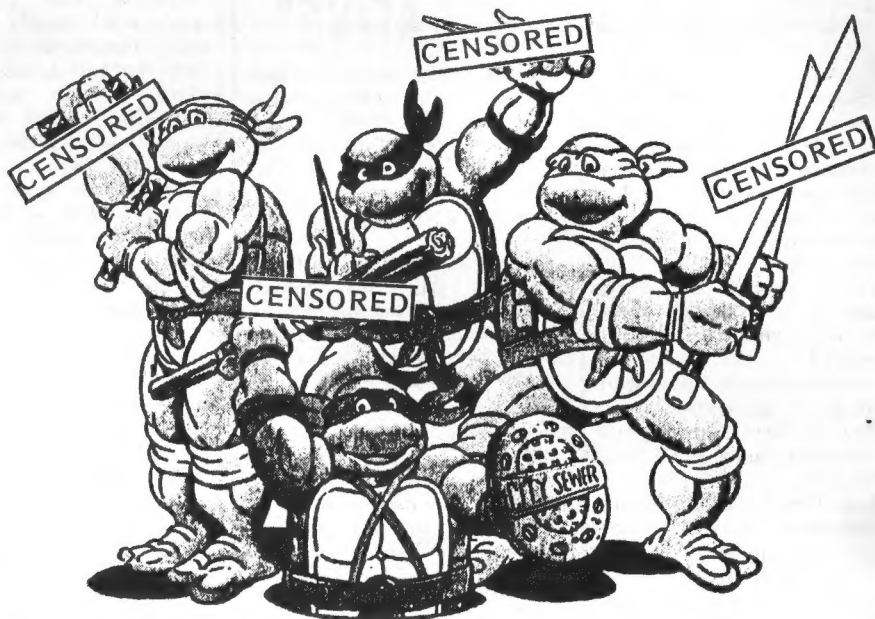
Gifts from Marvel UK

GENEROUSITY HAS gripped Marvel UK, who have lined up a series of free gifts for their April releases.

Doctor Who 161 will carry a free poster of Jon Pertwee's Time Lord incarnation, while **Cartoon Time** 27 carries a Whopper spearmint chew bar.

No details of other intended gifts were available at press time.

We are hero - not ninja



(c) Mirage Studios, 1990

MAKING the journey across the Atlantic has resulted in cosmetic surgery for a popular group of adolescent martial arts turtles.

The adventures of Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird's action amphibians, the **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**, have had a huge US following ever since Kevin and Peter came up with the idea while bored McDonalds employees.

Originally a self-published (basement printing) spoof of Frank Miller's martial arts antics in **Ronin** and **Daredevil**, the idea has been diluted as the popularity grew.

But, while tv, movies and Archie Comics make the Turtles bigger media stars than Eastman & Laird's

own irregular title could hope to achieve, neither creator seems concerned — as they still own copyright.

But when their now animated antics started on Children's BBC tv in January, they became **Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles**. Further, when Fleetway snapped up the rights to the children's Archie comic series, their fortnightly title also suffered the same title change.

It even looks like Muppet creator Jim Henson will take heed when his live-action feature film opens later this year.

So why are mutants considered acceptable to British audiences when ninjas are not?

Apparently because it's

the law! The turtles favoured martial art, ninjitsu, is illegal in Britain.

Martial arts shops face heavy fines if caught selling ninjitsu weaponry, so the media is obviously playing safe.

With both comic and tv antics being syndicated pick-ups, this should lead to some interesting editing of both weaponry and dialogue!

Whatever the case, no one seems to mind because **Turtlemania** is growing all the time.

The cartoon is watched by over 5½ million viewers and the first issue of Fleetway's fortnightly sold 100,000 copies.

The second issue sold even more, 110,000.

New DC UK reprint

A FOURTH title is being added to London Editions' DC range next month. **Zones** is a £1.75 bi-monthly title spotlighting Howard Chaykin's **Shadow** together with **Swamp Thing** and horror shorts from **Wasteland**.

Produced in London Editions' graphic album format, issue one will sport a free badge depicting Berni Wrightson's **Swamp Thing**.

Together with the above-mentioned strips, the content will include a feature on **Mars Attacks**, the notorious

1950s bubble gum cards condemned for their lurid artwork and now the basis for a feature film.

A future article will cover cult cartoonist Gary Larson, whose single frame gag series "The Far Side" appears in newspapers across the world including London's **Evening Standard**, and is currently also getting the movie treatment.

The first seven issues of **Zones** reprint the early Wein/Wrightson classic **Swamp Thing** stories, then jump ahead to Alan Moore's reign on the eco-elemental, while Frank Miller's **Ronin** waits in the wings.

"Our remit also includes film, sf, fantasy and anything strange we can think of," said a spokesman.

Fleetway specials

FLEETWAY will have 16 summer specials on the news stands during the next three months.

Out this month are **Battle**, **Roy of the Rovers** and **Whoopee**, while May 5 sees the release of **Billy's Boots**, **Buster**, **Dan Dare**, **Funny Fortnightly** and **Judge Dredd**.

On May 19, **Buster Monster**, **Fun**, **Eagle**, **Mask** and **Oink!** 2000AD fans will have to wait until June 2 with **Classic Action**, **Big Comic** and **Whizzer & Chips** specials released the same day.

Shipping Crisis

EXPORT COPIES of the Amnesty International special edition of Fleetway's Crisis comic were delayed last month because of fears of repercussions against 14 black South Africans currently held on Death Row.

Known as the Upington 14, these people were sentenced to death because they are alleged to have had common purpose with the murderer of a black policeman.

Their plight formed the basis of a story in issue 39 of **Crisis** which was produced in conjunction with human rights campaigners Amnesty International and Art & Society, a body that encourages access to ideas through art.

Solicitors representing the Upington 14 were worried that the comic would have an adverse effect on an appeal against the judgement.

They contacted Amnesty International and requested that South African distribution of the title be delayed for a week.

At Amnesty's request, Fleetway halted the shipment while an advance copy was sent to the solicitors. It was only when they gave their approval that shipping resumed.

Around 10,000 copies of the **Crisis**/Amnesty special issue have now been exported to South Africa.

Asked why editor Steve McManus had told journalists that he only expected 700 copies to be sold in South Africa, Fleetway press officer Igor Goldkind told **Comics International** that McManus had been backtracking.

"He was aware of the situation," said Goldkind.

Encouraged by Sara Selwood, director of Art & Society, Amnesty International joined with Fleetway to produce this issue of **Crisis**.

Written by Pat Mills, creator of **Judge Dredd** and **Marshall Law**, and painted by Sean Phillips, **Crisis** drew on Amnesty film and photographs to create two strips.

One, "The Death Factory", dealt with the Upington 14. The second, "A Kind of Madness", looked at conditions in Israeli-occupied Palestine.

Dan Jones, head of campaigns at Amnesty, told **Comics International** that he was drawn to the potential of comics as a means of getting their message out to a new and wider audience.

Feature by
SIMON ROGERS

"Our name is on this publication and our reputation goes with it," he said.

"My main concern was that we would be able to tell the story clearly without dropping our standards of accuracy," he said. "Once I saw that was possible it was all go."



(c) Fleetway Publications, 1980

He added that Amnesty wanted to reach young people interested in current affairs and social justice who would not necessarily read newspapers.

However Peter Strydom, First Secretary at the South African Embassy in London's Trafalgar Square told **Comics International** that adopting comic strips as a medium could be very dangerous for Amnesty International.

He said he had only taken a cursory look at the Amnesty issue of **Crisis**, but added that he felt it viewed issues in a very subjective light.

"It is an insidious form of characterisation, the sort of thing you get in films like **Lethal Weapon 2**," he said. "I don't think you can call it serious journalism at all."

"It concentrates on hanging, which is a very emotive thing. It is a moral issue and stirs up all kinds of emotions. Here in the UK

many people feel there should be a death penalty.

"This is a dangerous form of publication because it is typifying the South African Government as a very immoral government — as if it is just there to oppress and keep the blacks down."

Mr Strydom said that he felt Amnesty was abandoning its apolitical stance by collaborating with **Crisis**, adding that they had not campaigned on behalf of Nelson Mandela because they acknowledged that he was convicted for political crimes.

"With this, they are obviously trying to espouse a political campaign. Unfortunately."

Of the Upington 14 he said, "These charges were not created. They were guilty!"

The Israeli Embassy's press office dismissed the Gaza Strip story "A Kind of Madness" as 'pure

propaganda'.

"It is not based on anything, it's just a lot of lies," they said.

They added that they were still considering what course of action to take, but they would probably write to **Crisis** publisher Robert Maxwell, asking if he was aware of the issue.

Comics International asked if the Israelis felt they would not get the same right of reply that a newspaper would offer them.

"We are still considering our response," they replied. "It is the first time we have come across anything like this."

"This is just propaganda and we do not use propaganda, we use information. We are not sure that would fit the comic's format."

"It's not like a newspaper where if they run such a story you write to them and say 'that's a pack of lies'."

MP - Savoy mystery

MYSTERY surrounds the identity of a man who encouraged a Member of Parliament to pass a now controversial series of horror comics to the Greater Manchester Police.

That move led to police seizing copies of Savoy Books' **Lord Horror** and **Meng & Ecker** under the Obscene Publications Act last September.

Littleborough MP Geoffrey Dickens wrote to the police after receiving a letter from a constituent who complained that his 11-year old son had purchased Savoy's comics in a bookshop.

The letter writer enclosed copies of **Lord Horror** and **Meng & Ecker**, drawing attention to the lurid features of the titles and demanding action from the MP.

Mr Dickens told **Comics International** that he found the insistent call for action strange, but still referred the matter to the Greater Manchester Police.

However, when Mr Dickens attempted to contact the letter writer, he found that the family at that address knew nothing of the complaint.

In a further twist, an unknown man claiming to be Mr Dickens' assistant called on the family to remove the MP's letter of reply.

"Whoever it was that wrote to me, I don't know who they were or what they really wanted," said Mr Dickens.

Written by David Britton and drawn by Kris Guido, the comics were published with the assistance of the Arts Council of Great Britain as part of Savoy's "moral ambiguity phase".

Although Savoy describe **Lord Horror** and **Meng & Ecker** as satire, both titles attracted a mixed reaction to their depiction of racism.

Editor Mike Butterworth is best known for his involvement with cult rock band **Hawkwind** and author Michael Moorcock.

FastForward wins award

THE BBC's **FastForward** comic has been voted Best Juvenile Magazine in the third annual Star Product Awards.

Sponsored by newsagent trade magazine **CTN**, Seymour Distribution and PR firm Palmer & Harvey, the awards are given to innovative new launches.

"We're very pleased with

the award. It's given us all a boost," said **FastForward** editor Nicky Smith.

Puzzle magazine **Quiz Kids** came second, while Ravette Books' **Garfield Monthly** followed. "It's nice to be recognised as a quality magazine," said Gordon Volke, editor of the fat cat comic which claims a circulation of 350,000.

Top selling Comics of 1989

WHAT'S THE BEST selling comic in Britain? The answer might surprise you.

According to industry watchdog the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) the clear winner is John Brown Publishing's phenomenal **Viz** with sales over 920,000 for the final half of last year.

To bring that into a wider perspective, **Viz** outsells such top titles as **Woman** and **Woman's Own**.

The nearest comics contender used to be **Look-In**, but their sales have dropped recently by around 30,000 to 180,000, having lost ground to BBC's **FastForward** which now has audited sales of 210,000.

However, **Beano** and **Dandy** publishers DC Thomson keep their circulation figures a closely guarded secret,

with rumours bouncing wildly between sales of 100,000 and 400,000 for each title.

At the least they swamp **Look-In** despite its added bonus of tv promotions. At the most their combined might comes close to matching **Viz**. No one knows for sure.

The ABC figures also look at single issue revenue, and reveal that while **Viz** is a top seller, its single issue revenue of £830,715 falls below **Woman's** £886,342.

Fleetway's comics flagship **2000AD** appears in 86th place with sales just over 100,000 while Marvel UK's top title **The Real Ghostbusters** last seen at position 100 with 70,663 copy sales, has now dropped out of the chart entirely.

It should be noted that despite the single issue **Viz** phenomenon, its bi-monthly frequency still prevents it being an annual contender to the above-mentioned weeklies. Additionally, some of the quoted figures are averages based on the Jan-June 1989 sales period. While **Comics International** understands that they still apply, any publisher wishing to update or disprove them is invited to do so.

Well Tanked Up!



Photo: Oliver Maxwell

THERE'S ONLY one 'real' Tank Girl according to the folks at **Deadline**, but they won't say if it's Angie, Kirsty

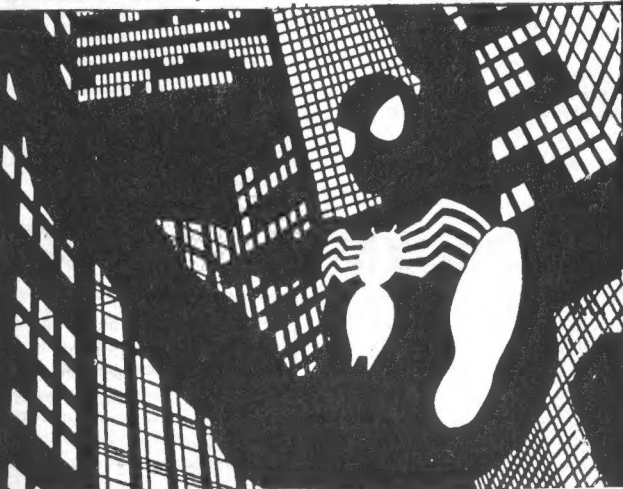
or Becky the Monkey.

Perhaps they'll let on when the planned Tank Girl record hits the street.

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Hampson exhibit

A SOUTHPORT MUSEUM is recreating the studio that sent Dan Dare to the stars.

The Atkinson Art Gallery in Southport, Mersey, has gathered many of the original models and reference materials that Frank Hampson and his team used in the 1950s.

The exhibition which starts on May 5 and lasts until September 1 includes many pages of original artwork and much of the merchandising produced during Dare's heydays.

In September the exhibition moves to Southport's Botanic Gardens museum, 300 yards from Hampson's original studio, where it will become a permanent display.

The return of Tom & Jerry

CARTOON FAVOURITES Tom & Jerry regain their own title courtesy of Celebrity Publications this month.

The cat and mouse duo have frequently popped up in various titles, such as **TV Comic** where they were the lead feature, and **Marvel Bumper Comic**. But it is nearly 18 years since the demise of Spotlight Publications' **Tom & Jerry Weekly**.

Strangely, when the title folded it was amalgamated with **TV Comic**, published by rivals Polystyle Press.

Tom & Jerry is now a 32 page monthly, also featuring Droopy, Spike & Tike, and Jerry's nephew Tuffy.

The cartoon duo also appear in alternate issues of **Fast Forward**, and in September their junior incarnations will appear on BBC1 in **Tom & Jerry Kids**.

Acme Avengers

THE MASTER of the absurd, Grant Morrison, is turning his attention to yet another British institution hot on the heels of Dan Dare, **The Avengers**.

Acme Press announced plans for a full colour three issue prestige mini-series based on the surreal adventures of John Steel and Emma Peel.

Written by Morrison, who has developed a reputation as an exponent of the bizarre with DC's **Animal Man** and **Doom Patrol**, the series will feature fully painted artwork by **Halo Jones** artist Ian Gibson.

The bi-monthly series will premiere in September to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the first appearance of the tv series.

"We're looking forward to this one, we're extremely excited about it. Grant has just finished his plot and it has everything going for it," says Acme's Dick Hansom.

The series, titled **John Steed and Mrs Peel, The Avengers** (presumably to avoid problems with Marvel) will spotlight the characters portrayed by Patrick Macnee

and Diana Rigg, though some other familiar faces are expected to appear.

Acme have also announced that their first super-spy project, James Bond by Mike Grell, has a second series under preparation.

For record-keepers' **Police Surgeon**, the series that the **Avengers** is credited to having been born out of, did not feature the same characters. In November 1960, **Police Surgeon** producer Leonard White issued a memo stating that he wanted a new series, similar to **Police Surgeon**, but moving away from the medical setting. Dr Brent was re-written as Doctor David Keel, with John Steed as his associate. It was intended that accompanied by female leads Julie Stevens as Venus Smith and Honor Blackman as Cathy Gale, the actors would alternate when the original 26 programmes were extended to 39.

But the Equity dispute of 1961 led to Ian Hendry seeking work in Hollywood, and the remaining three appearing without him.

Look-In looks out

CHANGES in the world of television listing magazines could have far-reaching effects on **Radio Times** and **TV Times** junior editions, **FastForward** and **Look-In**.

Currently only those titles can give detailed listings of programmes, and they are firmly entrenched with their respective channels. But the enactment of the Broadcasting Bill later this year will open the doors to a new range of competing television magazines.

For **Look-In** it will mean the opportunity to base strips on BBC programmes.

"I fully expect to be putting in bids for some BBC programmes," **Look-In** editor Colin Shelbourn told **Comics International**. "So **FastForward** better watch out, we might be swiping some of their strips — though I expect they'll put in a bid for some of ours."

"We haven't felt able to approach the BBC up to now. We've been very much tied to ITV programmes, but now with the new legislation we feel anything

is fair game."

FastForward editor Nicky Smith was more cautious. She revealed they were looking at ITV programme details, but nothing else.

"I think we will always retain a BBC bias," she said.

New UK Marvel

THE CAST of **Excalibur** will face an environmentally unfriendly menace when **Pendragon** hits the newsstands in June.

Previously announced as **Avalon**, the new series draws closely on Arthurian legend.

Written by Marvel's **Strip** editor Dan Abnett and John Tomlinson, the artwork is supplied by new discovery Gary Erskine.

Samples of Gary's work appear in **Strip** 10.

Eagle relaunch

JUST OVER forty years since the original **Eagle** was launched, its modern counterpart is undergoing another radical facelift to bring it into the nineties.

In comes more colour pages and better paper. Out go "Doomlord", "Charlie's War", "Storm Force" and "Loner".

Only Dan Dare and "Computer Warrior" survive the spring clean. Dare,

written by British comics veteran Tom Tully, with artwork alternating between Keith Watson and David Pugh, gains a fourth page, while **Computer Warrior** by John Wagner and Mike Dorey becomes a full colour strip.

High hopes are being placed on the re-launch which, it is hoped, will boost sales over 100,000 copies a week.

IN BRIEF

DEADLINE

AMERICA is catching the **Deadline** bug as trans-Atlantic sales soar. Material from some 'famous names' can be expected soon, while another Tank Girl lookalike contest is to be held at the Glasgow Comic Art Convention in March.

MARVEL UK

MARVEL UK's latest movie magazine, **Fantasy Zone**, ceased publication with its sixth issue, out last month. This marked the company's third attempt to break into the film world with a regular title.

Following their success with the authorised **Star Wars** one-off magazine in 1977 (reprinted from Time-Life Books), it acquired the rights to **Starburst** for £7500, but sold the title to Visual Imagination in 1987 for an undisclosed sum. **Starburst** editor at Marvel, Alan MacKenzie, conceived the short-lived companion title for Marvel UK, **Cinema**, which folded after 10 monthly issues. **Fantasy Zone** lasting only six issues makes it Marvel's latest and briefest flirtation with the film industry.

By contrast, the current **Starburst** publishers have doubled the frequency of their television sister title, **TV Zone**, to monthly status.

THE PUNISHER IS DEAD! Marvel UK's reprint title has ceased publication with issue 30.

Originally launched as a weekly, the final two issues were published on a fortnightly schedule.

This sudden move leaves both **Punisher** and **The 'Nam** strips unconcluded.

SAVOY BOOKS

DAVID BRITTON'S **Hardcore Horror** miniseries continues in the fourth and fifth issues of Savoy Books' **Lord Horror** series.

Lord Horror 4, out this month, costs £1.50 to cover an increased page count. Further editions of **Meng & Ecker** are promised for the summer, while Savoy has announced plans for a further title — **Monoshock**.

TRIDENT

SCANDALS and the strange are sorted out by **The Shadowmen** in Trident's new series of the same name.

Written by Mark Miller, previously seen writing Trident's **Saviour** title, art is by Andrew Hope and Ben Dilworth.

The story tells of a bizarre CIA offshoot who cover up anything from orgies to extra-terrestrials.

"It's profoundly weird," editor Martin Skidmore says of this six issue series commencing April.

SHAKESPEARE gets the **Licking Hitler** treatment in Trident's **Leir** this May. Simon (Sideshow) Spencer and John (Crisis) McCrea re-do King Lear as a gangster yarn.

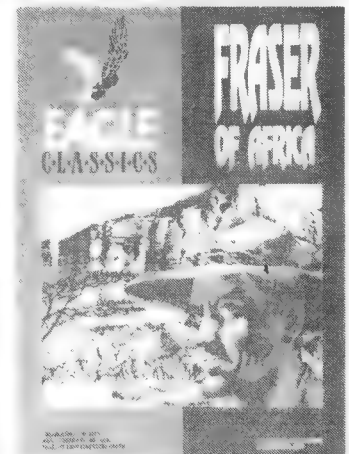
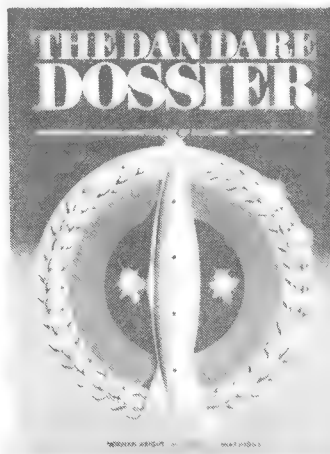
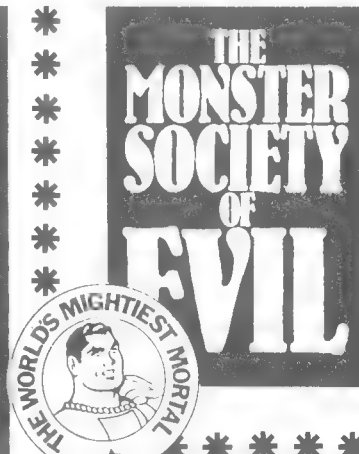
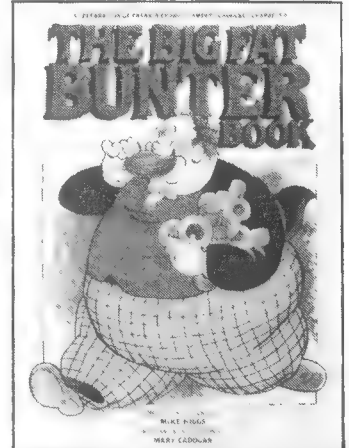
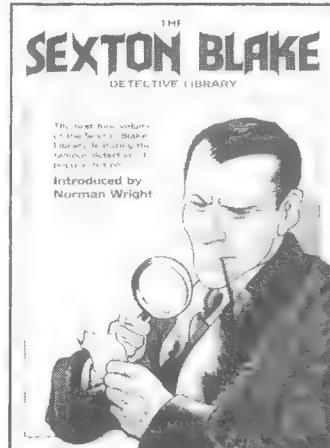
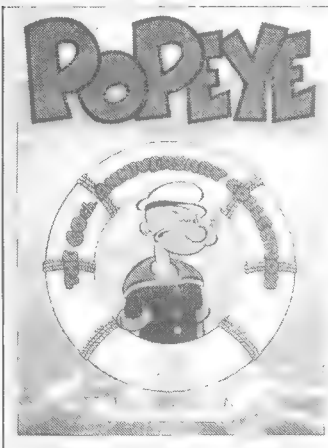
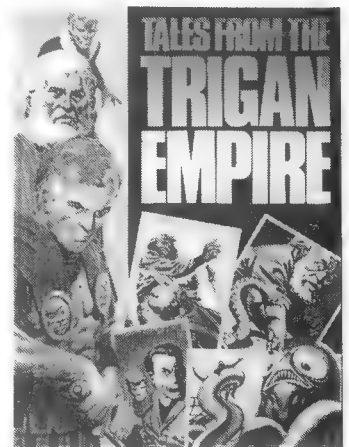
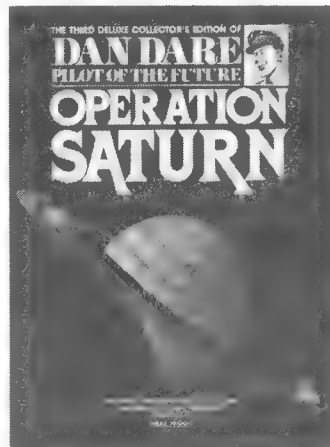
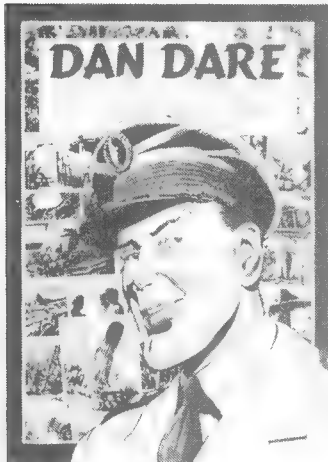
A MEDIEVAL prologue to **Saviour** is presented by several guest artists in Trident issue 5, while "The Light Brigade" is handled by several guest artists, including the 'extraordinary talent of' Martin Hand.

"Shadows" takes a break for several months. "Artist Pete Martin no longer feels able to continue with the strip," says editor Martin Skidmore.

Highlight of issue 5 is expected to be "Lateral Organisms" — an ecological fable by Danny Derbyshire.

ARE THESE ON YOUR BOOKSHELF?

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gRAPHIC NOVELS

COMICS INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

'Real' novelist signs with Acme

A BOLD MOVE towards breaking the traditional mold of comics has been taken by independent publishing house Acme Press. They have commissioned a "real" novelist to script a graphic novel.

They hope that Brixton-based author Martin Millar will produce a graphic novel that will work for a general readership, rather than tap the existing market.

Millar already has a cult following from his novels *Lux the Poet* and *Milk Sulphate & Algy Starvation*. He has been proclaimed by *The Face* and *i-d* magazines as a talent to watch.

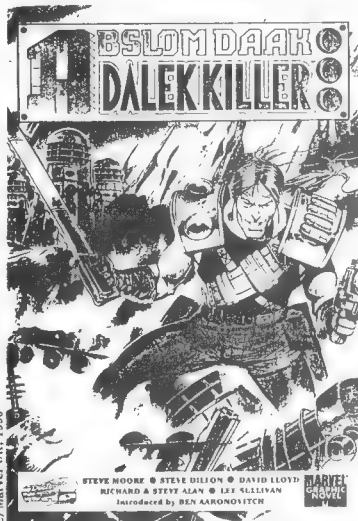
Art is being handled by

Deadline's Jamie Hewlett and Phillip Bond who, Acme tells us, are keen to do their best work.

Titled *Lux and Alby Sign On And Save The Universe*, the work is described by Acme as "the hilarious story of a paranoid speed dealer, apretty, talentless poet and a Buddhist goddess."

"The action ranges from the streets of Brixton to the gates of Nirvana."

The book, expected to be ready for June will be co-published with Fourth Estate — the publishers of Millar's novels. "We hope to learn more about book publishing from them," says Acme.

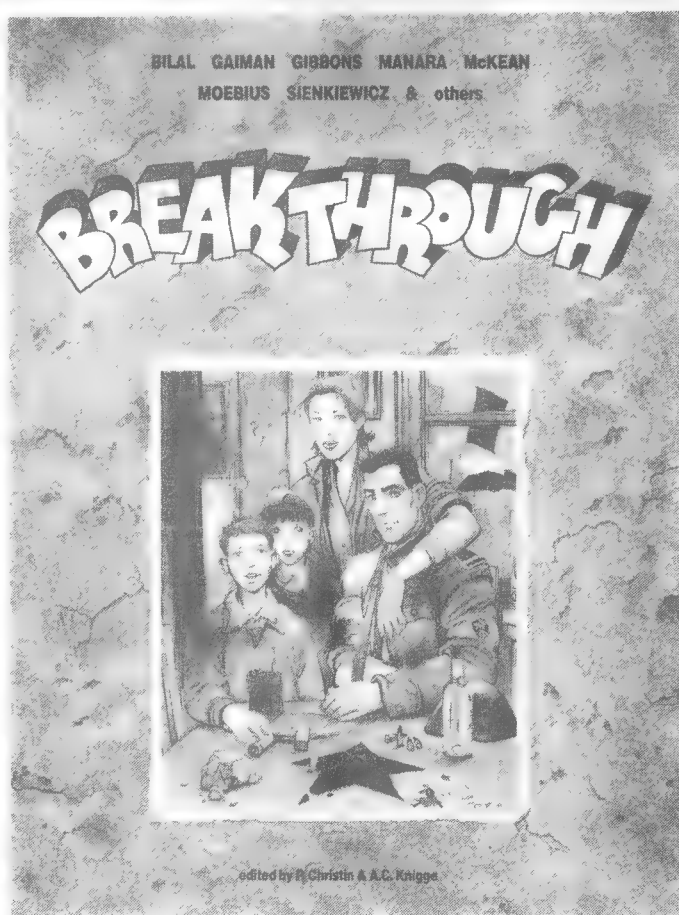


The Dalek Killer returns

WITH STORIES being printed for the fourth, and most expensive time, *Ablom Daak - Dalek Killer* goes on sale April 27 as a 96 page £5.95 black and white graphic novel.

That it is a collection of several strips, thus an anthology seems unimportant in the current 'graphic novel' hysteria.

With linking material and cutaway illustrations, this volume has a cover by Steve Dillon and John Higgins.



A TRUE COMICS celebration takes place in the new softcover colour album, *Breakthrough*.

Published worldwide simultaneously, with different black plates for language changes, Catalan handle America (at \$13.95) while Titan have picked up UK rights at £7.95.

The celebration is the victory of democracy for many of the Eastern European Soviet states, with particular focus on Berlin.

Taking up the thematic challenge, contributors include Dave Gibbons, Neil Gaiman & Dave McKean, Enki Bilal (cover), Jacques Tardi, Milo Manara, Moebius, Bill Sienkiewicz, and several

Eastern European artists.

The only disappointment in this Calrsen Publishing of Germany project is the price.

This 80 page book deserves to reach the widest possible audience, with its theme and international range of popular contributors. But with such a high cover price, it denies itself such.

As an internationally combined print run, with 13 countries participating, the unit cost should have been drastically lower than on most similar but smaller productions.

Someone, somewhere could have been a little less capitalistic on this one.

(c) Titan Books 1990

IN BRIEF

ACME PRESS

ON THE European front, Acme have announced that a second volume of *Lea* by Letendro and Rossi will be released.

Titled "The House", it will appear in the second half of this year.

ATOMEKA PRESS

BOOKSTORE distribution opens a new door for A1 publishers, Atomeka Press, who are adding *A1 True Life Bikini Confidential*

to their schedule. Described as a lighter fun book, this summer special includes a new strip from Tank Girl's Hewlett & Martin — *Hell City*.

More of The Bojeffries Saga and another Mr Monster story keep the chuckles flowing, while The Rocketeer's fave pin-up, Betty Page, gets the gallery treatment from John Bolton, Bill Sienkiewicz and Bob Burden.

FLEETWAY

MORE CELTIC thrill power from 2000AD's Pat Mills and Simon Bisley in the second *Slaine* graphic novel,

due out March 15.

MAD LOVE

ORIGINALLY announced as *The Manglebrot Set*, Mad Love's second publishing venture is indeed unique.

Written by Alan Moore and illustrated by Bill Sienkiewicz, this 12-part 40 page bi-monthly series is in a unique 10 x 10" format, priced £2.75.

With the first issue on sale now, Mad Love describe *Big Numbers* as "a freeze-frame portrait of a community on the verge of collision, locked in a crash course with the 21st century."

TITAN BOOKS

THE LAW still rules at Titan Books who are continuing to publish collections of *Judge Dredd's* adventures. The latest, *Mega-City Vice* 1, costs £5.50 and is published on April 15.

HOLY EXCLAMATION!! Jolly japes with the Ca(m)p(d) Crusader and his chum from Krypton are the order of the day in Titan's sixth *Batman* paperback, *Batman and Superman*, price £2.95.

Described as 'camp comedy classics' it's up to you to decide if they really were the world's finest!

THE EDGE OF FOREVER

ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS

All comics are in very fine condition or better except where otherwise stated (standard grading terms apply).

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DC

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(c) DC Comics Inc, 1990

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(c) Marvel Comics, 1990

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distribution news

DISTRIBUTION OF American comic books in Britain can appear to be a bewildering affair.

Because of the relatively recent widening of format and price, retailers and buyers are faced with a seemingly contradictory pattern of availability and price conversion.

In future months, **Comics International** aims to explain why some retailers do not carry certain titles, and what will be available, when where, and at what price.

At the moment there are two forms of comics distribution, through the traditional retail newsagent (our equivalent of the US newsstand) and the more recent ever-expanding specialist comics shops.

RETAIL NEWSAGENTS

Since the birth of the comics industry, retail newsagents have been supplied by local wholesalers, who in turn receive their stock from national magazine distributors.

Wholesalers are basically outgrowths of large chains of retailers who, collectively, were able to demand better discounts from their suppliers, the national distributors.

Over a period, by also supplying local retail newsagents outside their own groups, the current situation was achieved.

While large cities are serviced by van representatives, able to advise, adjust and top up supplies, small towns are totally reliant on their railway station or high street wholesaling retailer to supply their titles.

The current drawback to this system is that one major wholesaler, John Menzies, chooses not to carry a wide range of comic books. This does not only affect all the Menzies outlets, but also all the local newsagents who buy from Menzies wholesale.

WH Smiths, the other leading national wholesaler, limits American comics by price only, and carries the full range of 75¢ and \$1 titles.

NATIONAL DISTRIBUTORS

There are two companies currently distributing comics on a national basis. Comag, the country's biggest magazine

distributor, who import Marvel Comics, and Moore Harness (once known as Thorpe & Porter) who import DC Comics.

COMAG

As well as distributing home grown comics such as British Marvel and the 2000AD colour reprint line, Comag are distributors of Marvel's US product, and it is for their benefit that the often misleading UK prices are cover printed.

On general distribution through Comag, several months after the Titan and Neptune specialist shop copies, are the following titles: **Excaliber** @ 75p; **Marvel Comics (presents)** @ 65p, the black and white magazines **Savage Sword of Conan** @ 95p, and 20 of the regular \$1.00 32 page **Marvels** @ 60p.

The reason for 20 titles is that the wholesalers and retailers take 20 - bundles all with the same cover price to make it worth their handling. Twenty individually priced and individually ordered titles would not be efficient to news traders handling them. So as a rule of thumb, if Marvel bring out a title that isn't a \$1.00 book, don't expect to see it in your newsagent!

MOORE HARNESS

Moore Harness, once known as Thorpe & Porter, are unsung heroes of the comics industry. When there was a ban on importing US comics in the 1950s, they printed UK editions, at 68 pages in black and white. They were also responsible for launching the **British Mad Magazine** in the late 1950s and **House of Hammer** in the mid-1970s.

When the ban was lifted, the TP titles (with a cute little indian tent, a teepee, as their symbol) were quickly axed and replaced by the real thing.

Providing a dream-come-true service to comics readers, Thorpe and Porter imported just about everything!

As well as their ongoing colour UK editions of **Classics Illustrated**, they distributed the full range of DC, Charlton, Archie, Dell (and later Gold Key), Harvey and Atlas.

First cover date titles to come over being the

COMICS INTERNATIONAL

November 1959 cover dates, hence the value leap on dealers' lists between October and November 1959 DC comics.

Priced originally at 6d, then jumping to 9d (that's 2½p and 3¾p for younger readers) some sixties comics had the price printed on the cover instead of the US cent price, while other years would have the less-attractive TP circular rubber stamp.



But to say that they were efficient would be a gross understatement. Many older collectors remember the extremely rare occasions when an in-house advertised American comic could not be found in your local newsagent, no matter how small your home town.

In fact, from memory only the **Secret Origins Annual 1** failed to be distributed, and made a frustrating gap in a collection.

When Atlas became Marvel, Thorpe and Porter continued to distribute their titles, with only **Tales to Astonish** 61, **Spider-Man** 18 and **Fantastic Four** 32 having such poor distribution you would have to search round maybe six newsagents to find them. A far cry from the situation of today where distributors are unable to provide such an excellent service.

The company's current distributed titles are all DC, with a system similar to Comag. Bundles are supplied to newsagents, with 20 mixed titles from the DC 75¢ and \$1.00 range, at a 50p cover price.

But unlike Comag, Moore Harness do import the full range of DC titles, unless prevented by such licencing restrictions as with **Gotham by Gaslight**, where Titan Books have acquired a reprinting right.

With this system, newsagents who wish to order by title can do so, and you will find your more involved shops do carry the higher price titles.

We'll look at specifics next month now we've covered the ground work.

Feature by Dez Skinn

Humour Publications
 8 PASTON PLACE
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 EAST SUSSEX BN2 1HA
 Tel: 0273 693622
 Fax 0273 676677

6 March 1990

Dear

Humour Publications is seeking ADULT STRIP CARTOONISTS.

The type of work we are looking for would certainly not appear in the "Beano" but could quite easily be likened to the sort of humour that appears in "Viz".

We need either single frame one-offs, or full page/double page spread regular strip cartoons, with a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 18 frames per page.

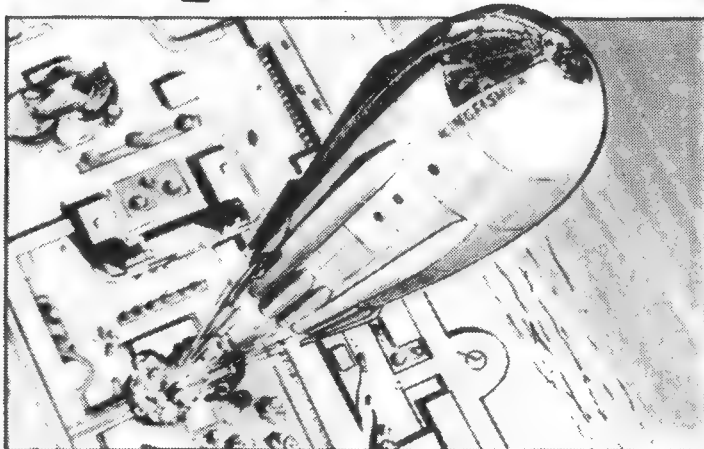
If you feel you may be able to produce this type of work please telephone me on 0273 693622.

Best regards

RUSSELL CHURCH

RC003/FD

Eagle relaunch from Fleetway "Spaceships Away!"



(c) Fleetway Publications, 1990

IT WAS FORTY years ago this month that the publishing world was given a hefty jolt that broke a self-imposed austerity and set the level of aspiration for many years to come. Strangely, this slap in the face came from a sixteen-page thrupenny weekly comic.

Titled *Eagle*, it was conceived as a high quality boys' comic. Though there were chuckles about its editor Marcus Morris being a vicar, *Eagle's* appearance had wider implications than mere children's entertainment.

With its launch, Hulton Press shattered a wartime publishers agreement that had prevented magazines being offered to retailers on sale or return conditions. Paper was an expensive resource that couldn't be wasted.

As the first post-war mass circulation magazine to be launched, the comic that was to introduce *Dan Dare*, *Pilot of the Future* to the world ruffled more than a few feathers with its aggressive promotion.

Hulton Press guaranteed a circulation of 500,000 for its April 14 1950 first issue, but when the returns were counted, they found they had sold an astonishing 750,000 copies.

They had caught the attention of the nation's youth and their investment was to pay off in a big way.

Eagle's lead feature, *Dan Dare*, created by Frank Hampson, became a comics legend that refused to die and has inspired a generation of artists, scientists and politicians.

Other features had similar enduring qualities, *Riders of the Range* and *PC 49*, which adapted popular radio shows were all the stronger

Feature by SIMON ROGERS

for retaining the creators of their airwave adventures.

Exploded diagrams explaining the workings of cars, ships and planes set a style of visual education continued by *The Sunday Times*.

Captain Pugwash made his first appearance in *Eagle*, long before his BBC appearances. *Tin-Tin* and *Skippy the Bush Kangaroo* were both introduced to an English audience, with Snowy the dog retaining his French name, Milou.

Eagle featured early work by famed pony cartoonist Thelwell, and attracted features from Narnia-creator C. S. Lewis and Samaritans-founder Chad Varah.

It also experimented with documentary strips based on living people, such as Winston Churchill and Field Marshall Montgomery. It is said, however, that Churchill had such a strong aversion to science fiction that the *Dan Dare* pages were removed from his complimentary copies before mailing.

Eagle readers included Gerald Scarfe (who had an early cartoon published), rocket designer Alan Bond, futurist designer Syd Mead, record cover artist Roger Dean, scientist Kit Pedlar, *Likely Lad* actor Rodney Bewes, and Donald Treford, editor of *The Observer*.

Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown is another former reader. On a recent trip to his home town of Comber, Northern Ireland, he was presented with an old copy at the very newsagent where, as a boy, he'd had a regular standing order.

Greatly valued by Ashdown, the issue was signed by Dr John Alladise, leader of the Northern Ireland Alliance Party.

The strength of *Eagle*, epitomised by *Dan Dare*, but consistent to all features, was an attention to detail and an emphasis on research.

But such an approach can be expensive and Hampson's *Dare* was certainly that. His studio system — which involved extensive photographic and sculpted references — meant that on occasions nine people could be working on the two page strip.

For Keith Watson, one of the current *Dare* artists who joined the studio during the late 'fifties, that was the right approach.

"A lot went into the production and a lot came out," he told *Comics International*. "It was an in-depth approach. If someone else was doing the drawing, it gave Frank that extra bit of time to do research, to check that an idea would work.

"Frank's mechanical stuff always looked as if it would work, he liked to get it right. Perhaps one man could have done it all, but the result wouldn't have been the same.

"If you're just churning it out, there's no time to think, no inspiration. The

job looks rushed."

Eventually however, through a succession of company takeovers and mergers, the *Dare* studio was broken up.

Frank Hampson, in a well-documented series of events, left the comics industry embittered by losing *Dare's* copyright and the wealth such ownership had created for Hulton Press and subsequent publishers.

The 'seventies found him working as a college technician for a wage lower than his 'fifties salary. He died in 1985, aged 66.

Dare's popularity evaporated and he was forced off the cover and into reprint, though an early 'sixties stint by Watson is regarded as a later highpoint for the strip.

Finally in 1969 under an indifferent editorial team *Eagle* was merged into IPC's *Lion*.

It was in subsequent years that nostalgic memories began to gain momentum. There was a fan club, conventions and pre-production work done on *Dan Dare* film and TV series.

A book — *The Best of Eagle* — by original editor Marcus Morris collected some of the early material, while rock art publishers Dragon's Dream issued a three volume collection of *Dare* adventures.

Further books from Dragon's Dream collected Hampson's *Life of Christ* and Frank Bellamy's *Churchill* and *Montgomery* strips.

Purists were offended when, in 1977, IPC launched *2000AD* with *Dan Dare* as lead feature. The hero

with a crewcut, drawn by Italian artist Bellardinelli bore no resemblance to the character they knew.

This new version was not to last long, despite extensive reworking by *Watchmen* artist Dave Gibbons, and its cover space was given over to *Judge Dredd*. In March 1982, IPC launched a new *Eagle* with a colossal publicity campaign. A major feature of this new version, which was meant to revolutionise comics in the way its earlier incarnation had done, was the use of photo-strips.

Though they had proven a popular format for girls' romance comics, they didn't work out on boys' adventure strips.

Despite some amusing scripts, the photo-strips were soon replaced by more traditional material with only *Doomlord* surviving the transition to artwork.

One drawn strip which survived throughout was *Dan Dare*, though there were some surprises.

In the first issue of the new *Eagle*, in a strip drawn by Gerry Embleton, *Dare* is seen to defeat his arch-enemy The Mekon once and for all.

The Mekon escapes, of course, and comes gunning for Dan only to find a tombstone declaring that Dare perished in 1951.

For the next few issues, the Mekon wreaks havoc over the world until Dare's great-great grandson returns to take up the mantle of Treen-basher supreme.

Along the way it is revealed that Dare Senior had been a 'fifties test pilot thrown nearly fifty years into the future by a Mekon-created time warp.

Purists point out that if this were the case, there would be no reason for Dan to travel to a distant solar system in search of his missing father.

For the next eight years worth of stories, Dan Jnr swayed violently between trying to emulate his predecessor, through a *Star Trek* period, to being an intergalactic cowboy.

Fleetway, who had bought the title along with the other IPC comics, dismissed Dan Jnr last September for "looking too much like Bjorn Borg".

Hampson's biographer, Alistair Compton, had this to say. "Looking at *Eagle* 40 years on, and in particular the space fiction story Dan Dare, it is Frank Hampson's



Dave Gibbons had the job of 'modernising' Dan Dare for IPC Magazines/Fleetway in 2000AD

artwork that continues to impress.

"Frank Hampson and Marcus Morris are both dead, but what they did for young boys could, with profit, be repeated today."

Keith Watson, who had been drawing a Dutch football strip *Roel Dijkstra* was recalled and Dan Dare Snr was reinstated as the lead feature in *Eagle*. Now Watson's artwork alternates with that of David Pugh.

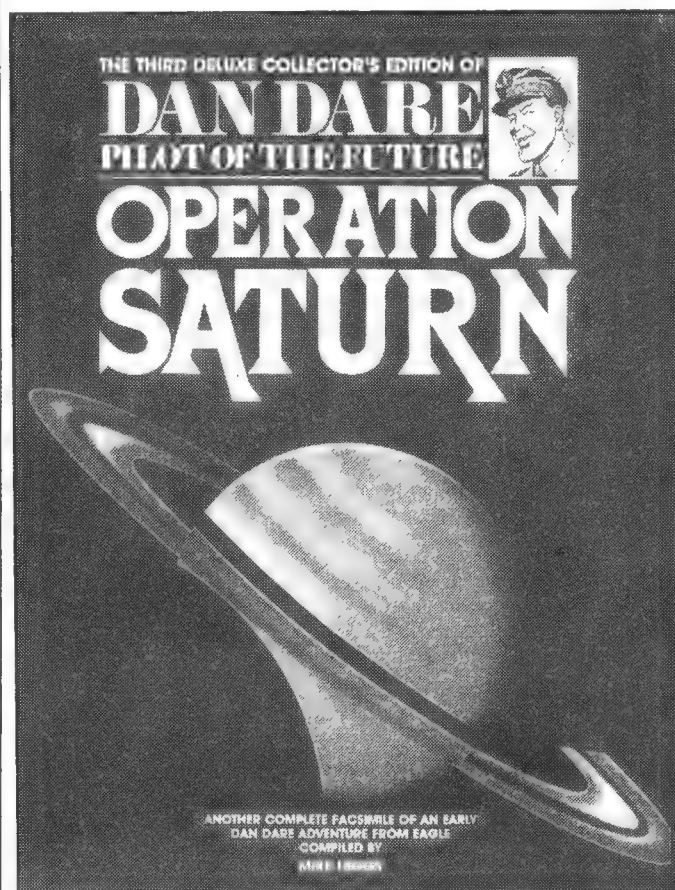
Reader reaction has been

favourable and Watson and Pugh's work will form the crux of an upcoming relaunch.

Explaining this decision, editor Barry Tomlinson told *Comics International*, "In a world dominated by American heroes, it's nice to have a true British hero."

"Which sounds very corny, but nearly every science fiction hero around is an American."

He added that the original Dare stories were very distinctive, "Which is why



Above: Hawk Books' cover art to their third excellent Dan Dare reprint volume, "Operation Saturn".

Dan goes on," he explained.

"We pick up readers of two generations — the dads and the kids. We don't go out deliberately to get the older generation, we do the storylines for today's kids, but if we get all age groups reading it, that's even better."

And are there changes in sight? "We're gradually updating Dan. You can't carry on doing the 1950s forever. We're changing the spaceships, the uniforms, the characters for that matter. You can't stand still."

For Keith Watson, moving forward means taking note of recent developments in technology. He cites Alan Bond's *Hotol* as an example.

"If Frank Hampson were doing *Dan Dare* today, instead of looking at the V2, he'd be looking at something like *Hotol* to base his spaceships on," he says.

For David Pugh, whose previous work includes *Slaine*, *Mask* and *Wildcat*, moving forward means stepping up the odds a bit.

"I'm knocking him around a bit," he says. "Making him a bit tattier around the edges, tearing his uniform."

"Which is all right while he's on a war-torn planet such as I'm drawing at the moment, but I'm dreading taking him back to Earth. I don't know what it looks like."

He admits to feeling challenged by trying to live up to audience expectations. "I remember as an eight year old, sitting in a doctor's surgery and reading *Eagle* for the first time," he says. "I couldn't believe it had been drawn by humans, it was just so perfect."

"I feel so responsible to Frank Hampson. I sometimes feel his ghost is looking over my shoulder. I just wish he'd give me a clearer idea of how to handle it. I don't want to do a shoddy job."

Finding the right look for the future is the major headache, adds David. "Today's kids won't accept flying cigars so readily. But there are still the old fans, the dads who are reading it. So you can't change it that drastically."

"There are tremendous continuity problems. According to Frank Hampson, Dan Dare was born in 1967," says David.

"He's out there somewhere! Good grief!"

Abort Mission



Photo: Tom Stoddart

SEEING THE FUTURE world of Dan Dare as it might evolve in Margaret Thatcher's Britain was the inspiration for Grant Morrison's forthcoming opus in Fleetway's new title, *Revolver*. But according to the man who would have put the real-life Dare into space, it just could not happen.

— was hailed as a major leap forward for Britain since it scoops up air from the atmosphere which it burns with its store of liquid

hydrogen.

But his hopes of cheap space travel were dashed in July 1988 when Kenneth Clarke, then Trade Minister, announced that the Government was not prepared to finance the project.

Attempts to encourage international collaboration were destroyed when the Ministry of Defence decided that the RB 545 design was classified because of potential military applications.

"Dan Dare showed a society that was pushing back the boundaries, but today's Britain isn't doing that. It isn't merely conservative politically, Britain doesn't spend any money on research worth a light," says Alan. "Space is an anathema to the current government."

"It's very difficult to get the City to consider something that isn't a well tried and traditional way of making money."

"We've become a very strict materialistic society, which wasn't the Dare concept. It was a more altruistic world. It wasn't socialist, but it was a rather liberal approach."

"Many aspects of it appeal to the human character. A lot of those traits are regarded these days as very old fashioned. They're nice to have but they don't make money."

Feature by SIMON ROGERS

If you ask rocket designer Alan Bond, who saw his own revolutionary design for a spaceplane shot down before it left the drawing board, he'd give a clear answer, "Certainly not".

He believes that the spirit of adventure and thirst for knowledge that embodied the Dare tales has been struck from British life.

Alan told *Comics International* that he had been interested in astronomy as long as he could remember, but it was as a seven year old reading *Eagle* that he realised it was possible to observe the stars from beyond Earth.

It was this new insight that led him to a career as a rocket designer and the development of *Hotol* — Horizontal take off and landing.

Launched from a rocket-powered sled, rather like Gerry Anderson's *Fireball XL5*, *Hotol* would carry heavy loads into orbit at relatively low cost.

Alan's *Hotol* rocket engine — codenamed the RB545



© Fleetway Publications 1990

"There wasn't anything materialistic about Dan," said Alan, recalling a sequence from the original Venus adventure. "It's when Dan first sees Sondar, president of the Treens. I think this was a bit of Frank Hampson's moralising creeping in.

"Dan goes to shake his hand and Sondar says something like 'Oh yes! An ancient gesture made by earth businessmen before they rob one another'."

Defining an economic reason for Dare's Space Fleet is difficult. Alan told **Comics International**, "It's not military because Dare's world is pacified. There's no economic underpinning, it was always presented as though it was part of the culture to be an explorer."

For Alan, it was an inspired and accurate use of technological concepts that made Dan Dare so exciting and kept him reading until **Eagle** folded in 1969.

"When things get really bad, I get them out (Eagles) and re-read them."

He feels the best Dare adventures were by the strip's creator Frank Hampson, who he fully credits with the invention of the impulse drive — a system where power is transmitted from Earth to a travelling space ship.

"Nuclear powered spaceships never figured in Dan Dare stories. Frank Hampson needed something to get them into space, so he invented a propulsion system," he said.

"I've been involved with studies to develop such a system, so I know it can be done.

"Then they would have used microwaves or radio to do it, which wouldn't have been efficient. Today we would use laser beams which give you a much tighter transmission.

"When I was working on that, the earliest references I found were from the 'sixties, but Dan Dare was ten years before that, so it's definitely a Frank Hampson invention."

Proclaiming the fourth Dare adventure, "Operation Saturn" to be his favourite, Alan adds that he has made a trajectory analysis for the strip's spaceship Valiant, looking at the path it took.

His verdict? "It's an achievable trajectory! It just about checks out. And

in the "Red Moon" story, where Hampson shows a diagram of all the planets, I checked them against an orrery programme and found they are all in the right place for that time of year.

"For some reason he views the Solar System from the South Pole, rather than the North, but once you realise that, it is all correct."

In "Operation Saturn", the trip to the ringed giant is made in a ship fuelled by an unstable monatomic hydrogen. "That's a real chemical, you know. It wouldn't be of any use as a propellant — it isn't energetic enough, but it is very unstable," said Alan.

"Blasco's twin beam lock to keep it stabilised is very innovative."

Some hi-tech ideas haven't made it into the real world though. Such as gravity motors for maintaining gravity inside spaceships, and metal that doesn't conduct heat.

Alan met Frank Hampson once, and the artist revealed that some ideas, such as a sargasso sea in space and faster-than-light lifeforms had been planted as teasers for future tales. "But we'll never know what they were now."

Alan praises the new **Eagle** for re-capturing some of the spirit of the original Dare. "It used to show Britain as part of an international network, that you could preserve your roots but not in a fascist sense. It showed an international effort to cope with things.

"I still read the old issues, though I only kept the Dan Dare bits, so it's costing me a fortune to re-acquire them.

"When things get really bad, I get them out and re-read them," said Alan. "When my fiancée comes round and sees them out, she says 'Oh no, it's one of those days'."

"I sometimes think of the strip as an alternative world that developed with a lot of values we lost after World War II. Maybe we'll get them back. I would like to think so."

Not content to let the Hotol project die, Alan has designed a new rocket drive — Satan — which he hopes will not be subjected to the same military classification as the RB 545.

If he gets the necessary backing, the old cry of "Spaceships Away" might not be such a pipe dream after all.

NOW — TWO DEALERS ROOMS FOR MORE CHOICE

COMICBOOK MARKETPLACE

1990
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6

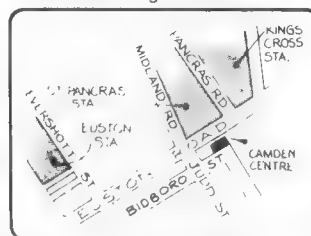
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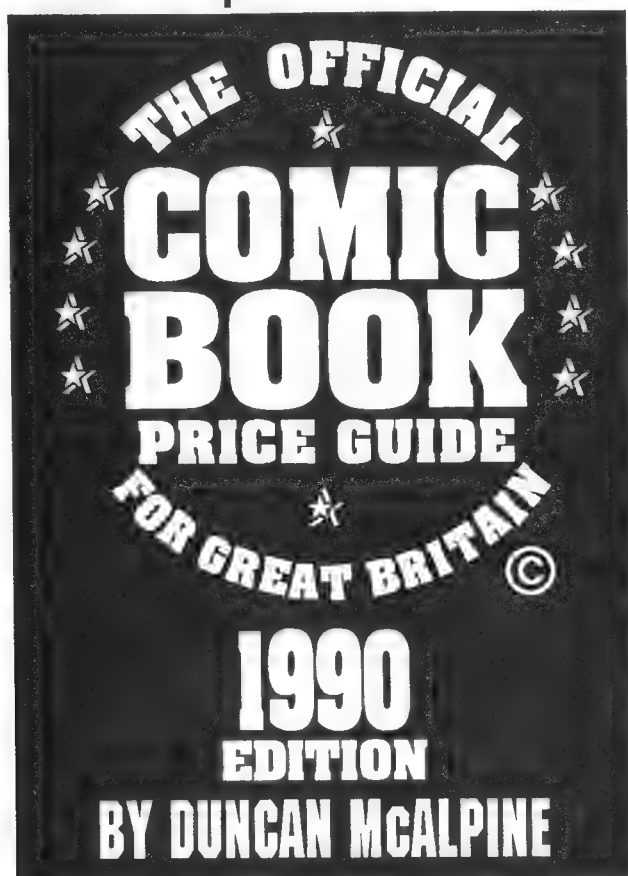
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Foreword by JONATHAN ROSS



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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS USED

(Smith + Jones, Ward) = Writer + penciller, inker.
HBK or ppbk = Hardback or paperback.
32pgs = Quantity of interior pages
Cover stock = Interior paper as covers

B&W = Black & white interiors
Squarebound = No staples, book format
Barter = Heavy white interior paper
(Date) = Shipping date

All prices of US titles are dollar prices. Where dollar & sterling prices (ie. \$1.00/50p) is stated, title will be distributed approximately 3 months after the slightly more expensive air freighted copies, which are sold in the UK simultaneously to USA. Because of additional costs in air freight shipping, advance copies are sold at a price based on dollar value.

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Publishers: Black and white cover reproductions are appreciated, and will enhance your titles entries. Supplied at column width would be appreciated.

MAY 1990

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

- < > **CEREBUS THE AARDVARK** 134: Sim + Gerhard. B&W, 32pgs \$2.00
- < > **CEREBUS: HIGH SOCIETY** 8: Reprints **Cerebus** 33 + original letters & editorial + new features. B&W, 32pgs (May 11) \$1.70
- < > **CEREBUS: HIGH SOCIETY** 9: Reprints **Cerebus** 34. B&W, 32pgs, May 25 \$1.70

AC COMICS

- < > **FEMFORCE 25:** (The Count + Propst) Creation of a 'new' Ms Victory by government. B&W, 44pgs \$2.50
- < > **THE ARMAGEDDON FACTOR CONCLUSION.** (Levins, Marimon + Goodhart, Sanders + Carbreta) Long-awaited one-shot featuring everybody in conclusion of Vardax invasion crossover: Capt Paragon, Nightveil, She-Cat, Stardust, Shade, Commando D, etc. B&W, 32pgs \$3.95
- < > **REDMASK OF THE RIO GRANDE** 1. (Frank Bolle reprints) Colour, 32pgs \$2.50
- < > **ROY ROGERS WESTERN CLASSICS** 2 (John Buscema 1950s reprints) Colour, 32pgs. \$2.95

AIRCEL PUBLISHING

- < > **CAT & MOUSE** 3 (Mann + Byrd). Demon returns. Mafia & police after Cat & Mouse. B&W, 32pgs \$2.25
- < > **D-ALPHA GRAPHIC NOVEL** (Barry Blair) Similar adult style to **Leather & Lace**, adults only. Future near perfect human race being destroyed by perversion & decay. PPBK, B&W, 8x11" \$9.95
- < > **LEATHER & LACE** 11 (Barry Blair) Shipped pre-bagged, adult, nudity. B&W, 32pgs \$2.50
- < > **QUADRANT** (Peter Hsu) Limited edition hardback, repr Hellrazor from **Quadrant** 1-8,

- expanded & uncensored. 1500 print run. Nudity. HBCK, 192pgs, 7x10, B&W \$49.95
- < > **RIPPER** 3 (Barry Blair) 2nd printing, shipped pre-bagged, adult. Street gang war. B&W, 32pgs \$2.50
- < > **SAPPHIRE** 4 (Durning + Blair) Adult, nudity & sex. Shipped pre-bagged. B&W 32pgs \$2.50
- < > **WLKING DEAD SPECIAL** 1 (Jim Somerville) 2 new zombie tales. B&W, 32pgs \$2.25
- < > **SILVERSTORM** 1 (Fortenberry, Butler + Paris). From creators of **Cat & Mouse**. New superhero with art by **Badger's** Steven Butler. B&W, 32pgs \$2.25

ALCHEMY STUDIOS

- < > **THE CHOSEN WARRIORS** 1 (Stadler, Walker + Van Note). SF villian Delgdo the Conqueror's father-in-law tries to stop son determined to destroy galaxy. 4-issue mini, colour, 28pgs \$2.25

AMERICAN SPLENDOR

- < > **AMERICAN SPLENDOR** 15. (Pekar + Dumm, Zabel, Zingarelli, Brown, Stack, Taylor) Mature readers, magazine size, B&W \$3.50

ARCHIE COMICS

- < > **ARCHIE** 379. 32pgs, colour. (May 1) \$1.00
- < > **BETTY & VERONICA** 32 colour, 32pgs (May 1) \$1.00
- < > **EXPLORERS OF THE UNKNOWN** 2 (Margopolis & Lindset) Explorers encounter "King Toot" and his mummies in Egypt. Also Who's Who entries. Colour, 32pgs \$1.00
- < > **HOT DOG** 4 (Nate Butler) 2 stories, co-stars Archie & gang. Colour, 32pgs (May 1) \$1.00
- < > **TO RIVERDALE & BACK AGAIN** 1 (Robert Lorien-Fleming) Based on upcoming live movie from NBC (airs USA 6 May) Usual gang grown up, in 30s. Colour, 32pgs (May 1) \$2.00

- < > **BETTY & VERONICA DOUBLE DIGEST** 20. Colour, 64 digest pgs (May 1) \$2.25
- < > **ARCHIE'S PALS 'N' GALS** 217. Colour, 32pgs (May 8) \$1.00
- < > **JUGHEAD** 19. Colour, 32pgs, (May 8) \$1.00
- < > **LITTLE ARCHIE** 609 Colour, (May 8) \$1.00
- < > **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES** 12 (Clarrain + R Brown, Mitchrone & Burger). Turtle's vs Krang & the Shredder in Dimension X. Intro villainous alien insect queen, Maligna. Colour, 32pgs (May 8) \$1.00
- < > **ARCHIE COMICS DIGEST** 103 Colour, 348pgs \$1.50
- < > **ARCHIE ANDREWS, WHERE ARE YOU?** Digest 69. Colour, 48pgs (May 8) \$1.50
- < > **BETTY'S DIARY** 35. Colour, 32pgs (May 15) \$1.00
- < > **ARCHIE** 3000 10 (Loren-Fleming + Margopolos, Parent & Lindsey) Futuristic adventures of the Archie gang. 32pgs, colour (May 15) \$1.00
- < > **RIVERDALE HIGH** 1 (Wilcox, Goldberg + Esposito) 2 stories, spotlighting individuals in Archie gang. Colour, 32pgs (May 15) \$1.00
- < > **JOSIE & THE PUSSYCATS** (Giant Series) 610. Colour, 32pgs (May 15) \$1.00
- < > **JUGHEAD JONES DIGEST** 64 Colour, 48pgs (May 15) \$1.50
- < > **BETTY & ME** 185. Colour, 32pgs (May 22) \$1.00
- < > **EVERYTHING'S ARCHIE** 151. 32pgs, colour (May 22) \$1.00
- < > **JUGHEAD'S DINER** 3 (Golliher, Parente & Kennedy) Colour, 32pgs, (May 22) \$1.00
- < > **BETTY & VERONICA SUMMER FUN** (Giant Series) 611. 32pgs, colour (May 22) \$1.00
- < > **BETTY & VERONICA ANNUAL DIGEST** 3 Colour, 48pgs (May 22) 1.50
- < > **LAUGH** 23. 32pgs, colour. (May 29) \$1.00
- < > **KATY KEENE** 34 (Wilcox + Lucas, Esposito) Quarterly (May 29) \$1.00

BLUE COMET

- < > **THE BLADESMAN** 2 (Marchman + Hughes, Stormon) plus

"Elf Legions" back-up strip (by Mitch Byrd). B&W, 32pgs \$2.25

BURCHAM

- < > **DARKWOLF THE DEMON HUNTER** 2 (R A Jones + Burcham) repr of **Malibi** 2. Plus 8 page new back-up. Colour, 2 of 4 \$2.50
- < > **TWO-FISTED HEROES** 2 (Jones & Burcham) repr **Eternity** mini-series "Fist of God" 2. New 8-page back-up. Colour. 32pgs \$2.50
- < > **FANTASY GIRLS** 1 (Alcala, Barras, Chan, etc) Pin-ups, strips, articles. Tasteful nudity. Colour, 32pgs \$2.50

CALIBER

- < > **GO-MAN** 4. 32pgs B&W \$2.50
- < > **THE DAY BROTHERS PRESENT** 1 (Dan & David Day anthology, plus some of late Gene Day's work. Anthology) B&W 32 \$2.50
- < > **BURIED TREASURE** 2 (Kirby, Kubert, Orlando/Wood reprints) B&W, 48pgs \$2.50
- < > **JAZZ AGE CHRONICLES** 2 (Slampyak) Private eye strip B&W, 32pgs \$2.50
- < > **ASHES** (Bergin) 1 of 6. Anthology of horror strips. B&W 32pgs \$2.50
- < > **DUTCH DECKER** 4 (Derks & Wu) On-going adventure, voodoo. 5-part mini. B&W 32pgs \$2.50
- < > **DEADWORLD** 16 (Bloodworth & Locke) Heavy zombie story. B&W, 32pgs \$2.50
- < > **GOD'S HAMMER** 3 of 3 (Calafiore) features Merlyn. B&W, 32pgs \$2.50
- < > **ROULETTER** 2 (various) Anthology sf/horror. B&W 48pgs \$2.50
- < > **CALIBER PRESENTS** 12 (various) Anthology, 48pgs B&W 2.50
- < > **FRINGE** 3 (Tobin + Hester) B&W, 32pgs \$2.50
- < > **KAFKA GRAPHIC NOVEL** (Seagle + Gaudiani) Renegade's **Kafka** 1-6 reprint. PPBK B&W \$12.95

CATALAN

- < > **THE WHISPER MYSTERIES** (Daniel Torres) Rocco Vargas's Astral Adventures continue in this 21st century series. PPBK 8x11" 48pgs colour \$9.95
- < > **BREAKTHROUGH** Special edition to celebrate the recent events in East Berlin and all of Eastern Europe. Contributors include: Enki Bilal, Dave Gibbons, Neil Gaiman, Milo Minara, Dave McKean, Jean Giraud, Bill Sienkiewicz. 80pgs PPBK 8x11" clr \$13.95

COMICS INTERVIEW

- < > **COMICS REVUE** 46 & 47 Newspaper strip reprints, current Batman, Hagar, Flash Gordon, Outland, Calvin & Hobbes, Modesty Blaise, etc) B&W 68pgs \$4.95
- < > **COMICS EXPRESS** 5 Reprints "odd" newspaper strips inc Berke Breathed's Outland + Jeff McNally, Mike Peters, etc. 64pgs B&W \$3.95

CRACKED

- < > **MONSTERS ATTACK** 2 & 3 Severin, Colan, Ditko, Morrow, Boyette etc. B&W 48pgs \$2.25

COMICO

- < > **ELEMENTALS** 15 (Willingham + Leeke, Chen) Mature readers. 32pgs Colour \$2.50

< > **JAGUAR STORIES** 1 (Seagle + Allred) Contemporary LA underworld thriller. Mature readers. B&W 32pgs \$2.25

DARK HORSE

< > **THE AMERICAN SPECIAL** 1 (Verheiden + Braithwaite) Ties up story from American 8 with new UK artist Doug Braithwaite (couldn't be anything else with that surname!) Back ups by Ron Harris & Ken Mayer Jr. B&W 32pgs \$2.25

< > **OUTLANDERS** 18 (Manabe + Lewis & T. Smith) SF. B&W 40pgs \$2.25

< > **THE EXQUISITE CORPSE** RED YELLOW GREEN (Prosser + Pander Bros) Adult material. Life & death of a serial killer. Shipped pre-bagged. 32pgs colour \$2.50

< > **THE ABYSS COLLECTION** (Stradley & Kaluta) Trade paperback of 2-issue movie adpt. Colour, 64pgs \$3.95

< > **LUTHER ARKWRIGHT** 4 (Talbot) Once more with feeling. Bryan's strip on its 5th time round. Xint Moorcock-ian stuff. 9 part mini. 32pgs B&W \$1.95

< > **THE GRID BOOK ONE** (Derry + Beauvais) Repr of Warlock 1-5. PPBK 7x10", 112pgs B&W \$7.95

DC COMICS

SHIPPING MAY 15

< > **NEW TITANS ANNUAL** 6 (Wolfman + Grummett, Cullins, Swan, Vey) Spotlights Starfire in her ultimate battle. 64pgs colour \$3.50/£1.70

< > **DOC SAVAGE** 21 (Barr + Whigham) Doc vs Air Lord, part 3 of 3. Colour, 32pgs \$2.00/£1.20

< > **LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES** 9 (Giffen, Bierbaums + Cullins, Gordon) "All new" origin concludes, Laurrel joins LSH. 32pgs colour \$1.75/£1.00

< > **THE BUTCHER** 3 (Baron & Pensa) Mature readers. Martial arts vs the Corporation. 3 of 5. 32pgs colour \$1.50/£1.00

< > **HAWKWORLD** 2 (Truman, Ostrander + Nolan) Katar & Shayera meet Byth in Chicago. 32pgs colour \$1.50/£1.00

< > **THE HUNTRESS** 16 (Cavalieri + Staton, Smith) Reveals secret of "Waterfront Warrior". Mature readers. Colour, 32pgs \$1.25/60p

< > **BATMAN** 450 (Wolfman + Aparo, DeCarlo) "Return of the Joker" Pt 1 of 3, continues in "Tec 617, concludes in Batman 451" Colour, 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **FIRESTORM** 99 (Ostrander + Mandrake) Build up to issue 100. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **FLASH** 40 (Messner-Loeb + LaRoque, Marzan) Guest stars Dr Alchemy. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA** 40 (Giffen, De Matteis + Hughes) Finale of "Despero Saga". Story leads into Justice League Quarterly 1. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **SUPERBOY** 6 (J Moore + Mooney, Templeton) First appearance young Lex Luthor. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **WONDER WOMAN** 44 (Preze + Newell, Marrinan + Tanghal). Ends "Silver Swan" story. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

SHIPPING MAY 22

< > **THE PRISONER**; Trade Paperback (Motter with Asquith) Repr of mini-series + feature with

tv pix. PPBK, 7x10", 208pgs, colour \$19.95

< > **MS TREE QUARTERLY** 1 (Collins + Beatty). Origin retold, inc Graham Nolan art. Squarebound 80pgs colour. Mature readers. \$3.95

< > **EL DIABLO** 11 (G Jones, Parobeck + Nyberg) Part 2 of 2 "The Franchise". Diablo vs LA crack gang. Colour 32pgs \$1.75/£1.00

< > **NEW TITANS** 68 (Kesels + Erwin) Return of Royal Flush Gang + Danny Chase. 32 pages colour \$1.75/£1.00

< > **TIME MASTERS** 6 (of 8) (Wayne Shiner + Thibert, Marzan) Guests stars Nabu, Lord of Order in ancient Egypt. 32pgs colour \$1.50/£1.00

< > **DRAGONLANCE** 21 (Mishkin + Randall, Elliott) "Taladas" Pt 1 of 4, heralds return of the old Dragon Gods. Colour 32pg \$1.50/£1.00

< > **FORGOTTEN REALMS** 21 (Grubb + Morales, Simons) "Triangles" pt 2 of 3. Colour 32pgs \$1.50/£1.00

< > **HELLBLAZER** 31 (Delano + Sean Phillips) Constantine's father's funeral creates emotional "roller coaster" Mature Readers. Colour 32pgs \$1.50/£1.00

< > **GREEN LANTERN** 2 (G Jones + Broderick, Villagran). Hal seeks solace, John Stewart encounters a guardian of Oa, Guy Gardner vs Tattooed Man. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **STAR TREK** 10 (David, Fry + Starr) "Trial of James T. Kirk" Colour 32pgs \$1.50/£1.00

< > **DETECTIVE COMICS** 617 (Grant + Breyfogle, Mitchell) "Return of Joker" part 2 (of 3). Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **HAWK & DOVE** 14 (Kesels + Guler, Hanna) Hawk's girlfriend becomes Kestrel, build up to true origin of H&D. Colour 32pgs \$1/50p

< > **MR MIRACLE** 17 (Moench + Phillips, Patterson) Manga Khan takes MM to Apokolyps. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

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< > **THE DEMON** 1 (Alan Grant + Semeiks, Rodier) New monthly, Batman to star in issue 3. Evil side of Demon reigns. 32pgs colour \$1.50/£1.00

< > **SUPERMAN** 45 (Ordway + Janke) Pt 1 of 3 of re-telling of Superman's origin as free extra pages. Clark returns to Smallville to tell Lana of his relationship with Lois. Colour 40pgs 75c/50p

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Hawkins) must team up together to defeat The Bishop. 32pgs colour \$1.50/£1.00

< > **DOOM PATROL** 34 (Morrison + Case, Nyberg) Doc Magnus's new robotic body for Robotman's disembodied brain + Crazy Jane trying to adjust. The Brain & Monsieur Mullah return. Colour 32pgs \$1.50/£1.00

< > **FORD FARLAINE** 3 (Jones + Brown, Delbo, Heck) Third chapter in the prequel to the upcoming feature film starring shock-comedian Andrew "Dice" Clay. 32 pages colour \$1.50

— UK newsstand national distribution not confirmed at press time.

< > **L.E.G.I.O.N.** 90 17 (Grant + Kitson, McKenna) All-out assault on Dagon-Ra and his space pirates. Colour 32pgs \$1.50/£1.00

< > **SANDMAN** 18 (Gaiman, Dringenberg, M Jones) "A Dream of a Thousand Cats" — what cats really dream about. Mature readers. Colour 32pgs \$1.50/£1.00

< > **STAR TREK; THE NEXT GENERATION** 10 (Friedman + Marcos) Look back at career of Capt Picard, Enterprise goes rogue. 32pgs colour \$1.50/£1.00

< > **SWAMP THING** 97 (Wheeler + Broderick, Alcalá) Swamp Thing returns to Hell to rescue his daughter from the demon Nergal. Arcane guest stars. 32pgs \$1.50/60p

< > **BATMAN** 451 (Wolfman + Bright, Alcalá) Return of Joker Pt 3 (of 3). Face to face conflict. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **STARMAN** 24 (Stern + Lyle, Hanna) Starman travels to San Francisco to confront the man who killed his father. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN** 468 (Jurgens + Thibert) Superman delves into Matrix Chamber, which brought him to Earth, plus 8-page free bonus, pt 2 of origin retelling. Colour 40pgs 75c/50p

< > **BATMAN ARCHIVES** 1 Reprint of all Batman stories from Detective 27 to 50. First 2 years of Dark Knight's adventures. Intro by comics historian Rick Marschall. Will not be reprinted as trade paperback. Hbk 7x10", 306pgs, colour. \$39.95

< > **DOCTOR FATE** 19 (DeMatteis + McManus) Linda continues her mad search for Eric. Dr Benjamin Stoner (from 1987 miniSeries) returns. Chaos stars. Colour 32pgs \$1.50/60p

< > **ATLANTIS CHRONICLES** 5 (David + Maroto) Twin cities undersea combine against common threat. Colour, 48pgs \$2.95/£1.50

< > **THE SHADOW STRIKES!** 11 (G Jones + Barreto) Harry Vincent & The Shadow race to save Margo from a figure from her past. Colour 32pgs \$1.75/£1.00

< > **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** 20 (Mishkin + Duursema, Magyar) "Luna" Pt 2 of 4. 32pgs colour \$1.50/60p

< > **LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT** 9 (Morrison + Jansen) "Gothic" Part 4 of 5. Batman returns to Gotham to attempt to ally crime bosses against Mr Whisper. Colour 32pgs \$1.50/£1.00

< > **NEW GODS** 18 (Evanier + Cullins, Blyberg) Yuga Khan has his sights set on Apokalyps. Intro new team The Monitors. Colour 32pgs \$1.50/£1.00

< > **GREEN ARROW** 34 (Grell + Jurgens, McLaughlin) Dinah helps Ollie through trauma of recent abduction, while the hope of a new life is crushed. Mature readers. Colour 32pgs \$1.25/60p

< > **BUGS BUNNY** 2 (Cavalieri + Fiala, Costanza) Witch Hazel after the Fudd statues, the Looney Tunes gang to the rescue. Colour 32pgs 2 of 3 part mini \$1.00/50p

< > **CAPTAIN ATOM** 43 (Weisman, Kayanan, Tanghal) Ghost guests as Cap fights with a dead man for possession of his own body. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **DETECTIVE COMICS** 618 (Grant + Breyfogle, Mitchell) Now published twice a month. Parents of Tim Drake (the new Robin) are abducted. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE** 16 (Giffen, Loeb + Sears, Marcos) Rocket Reds call JLE when Moscow Embassy is destroyed. Guests BlueJay. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **SUICIDE SQUAD** 43 (Ostrander, Yale + Isherwood) "Phoenix Gambit" part 4 of 4. Waller faces Deadshot. Guests Count Vertigo and Red Shadows plus Batman. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/50p

< > **ACTION COMICS** 655 (Stern + McLeod, Breeding) Guests Lois, Jimmy and 8-page free origin insert concludes. Colour 40pgs 75c/50p

DISNEY

< > **DISNEY COMIC ALBUM** 1: Donald Duck & Gyro Gearloose. Reprints 5 Carl Barks classics. PPBK, 8x11", 48pgs \$6.95

< > **WALT DISNEY'S COMICS & STORIES** 549 Carl Barks reprint "The Hypnotising Gun". Colour 32pgs \$1.50

< > **DONALD DUCK ADVENTURES** 2 Carl Barks "Limber W Guest Ranch" reprint + John Lustig & William van Horn new strip. Colour 32pgs \$1.50

< > **DUCK TALES** 2 (Wolfman + Quartieri, Bat) "Scrooge's Quest Pt 2 of 2. Colour 32pgs \$1.50

< > **DISNEY COMIC ALBUM** 2: UNCLE SCROOGE. Reprints Carl Barks' "Phantom of Notre Duck" & "Whale of a Good Deed". PPBK, 8x11", 48pg colour \$6.95

< > **UNCLE SCROOGE** 244 "The Adventurer's Club Award" 32pgs colour \$1.50

< > **CHIP 'N' DALE RESCUE RANGERS** 2 (Saavedra + Torriero) Pt 2 of 2 origin story. Colour 32pgs \$1.50

< > **MICKEY MOUSE ADVENTURES** 2 (Gilbert + DeStephano, Martin) "Riddle of the Sphinx" Colour 32pgs \$1.50

< > **ROGER RABBIT** 2 (Worley + Hoberg, Simons) "The Color of Trouble". Plus "Gym Dandy" (Rice + Langley). Colour 32pgs \$1.50

< > **GOOFY ADVENTURES** 2 3 new stories + Mike Royer poster. Colour 32pgs \$1.50

ECLIPSE COMICS

SHIPPING MAY 1

< > **CYBER 7 BOOK 2: 8** (Shuho Itahashi) Cyber 7 robots must defeat Kaku's forces to help Natsuko regain the throne of the Crystal World. B&W 32pgs \$2.00

< > **POGO & ALBERT** Vol 2: Pogo's Screechers. (Walt Kelly) Reprints from Animal Comics and Pogo Comics continue in chronological order. Two versions Hbk, 64pgs \$29.95

PPBK, 64pgs colour \$7.95

SHIPPING MAY 8

< > **KRAZY & IGNATZ** Vol 6: 1921 Sundays. (George Herriman) Chronological reprinting of the

classic Kat strip continues. 9x12"
HBK, 64pgs, B&W \$29.95
PPBK, 64pgs, B&W \$9.95

SHIPPING MAY 15

< > **DIRTY PAIR: A Plague of Angels** 1 (T Smith & A Warren)
5 issue mini-series. B&W 32pgs \$2

SHIPPING MAY 22

< > **BLACK MAGIC** 3 (Masamune Shirow) Future robot wars. B&W 48pgs \$2.75
< > **THE COMPLETE POGO COMICS** Vol 3. (Walt Kelly) limited edition HBK, 8x11", 64pgs \$29.95

SHIPPING MAY 29

< > **STINZ GRAPHIC ALBUM** (Donna Barr) 15 collected tales of the half-horses of the Geisei Valley, five new stories incl. PPBK, B&W 160pgs \$12.95

ETERNITY

< > **APACHE DICK** 4 (Jacobs, G. Jones, Robertson) 4 of 4, mini series. B&W 32pgs \$2.25
< > **BROID** 1 (Eldred + Kruegar) One man's stand against a future world gone mad. Double size first issue. 56pgs, B&W \$2.75
< > **CAPTAIN HARLOCK** 8 (Gibson + Dunn) Tochio is captured by the people of the space colony El Dorado. B&W 32pgs \$1.95
< > **I LOVE LUCY GRAPHIC ALBUM** reprints 15 strips from the 1950s *I Love Lucy* comic, published in cooperation with CBS tv. Photocover. PPBK B&W \$19.95
< > **THE JACKAROO** 3 (Gary Chaloner) features a deadly Metsuke monk adversary. Back-up by Chaloner and Jason Paulos. B&W 32pgs \$2.25
< > **LENSMAN** 2 (O'Connor, Eldred Young) Continues EE 'Doc' Smith concept as animated for Japan's movie. Kimball Kinnison is given the mystical Lens but at the cost of his father's life. B&W 32pgs \$2.25
< > **PISTOLERO** (RA Jones + Wyman) "In the Old West only Dead Men Fight Fair". Squarebound B&W 56pgs \$3.95
< > **SCIMDAR BK 2: FEAST & FAMINE** (RA Jones, R Davis, Baldwin). Repr second Scimidar series, guests Hugh Hefner. Adult material, shipped pre-bagged. PPBK 7x10 B&W \$6.95
< > **SCIMDAR BK 3** issue 4 (RA Jones, Davis, Parks) Conclusion Bk 3 (4 of 4). Nudity, sexual situations. Adult. B&W \$2.50
< > **SHERLOCK HOLMES: A Case of Blind Fear** (Powell + Makinen) Reprint of 4-issue mini-series, sequel to *Scarlet in Gaslight* PPBK 7x10" B&W \$9.95
< > **SHERLOCK HOLMES** 23 (Frank Giacoia) Reprint final issue. Holmes vs Moriarty at Reichenbach Falls. B&W 40pgs \$2.75
< > **SHERLOCK HOLMES OF THE '30s** 5 (Leo O'Mealia) Adpt of "The Naval Treaty" Issue 5 of 7. B&W 32pgs \$2.95
< > **SPICY TALES** 18 Sally the Sleuth, Dan Turner Hollywood Detective; Gail Ford Girl Friday, Diana Daw. Mature readers. B&W 32pgs \$2.95
< > **SPICY WESTERN STORIES** Trade Paperback. Reprints 8 tales of wild west naughtiness from 1930s pulps. Mature readers. Uncensored. PPBK, 7x10, B&W \$9.95
< > **THE TIME MACHINE** 3 (Spangler + Ross) Time Traveller battles the Morlocks. Part 3 of 3. B&W, 32 pages \$2.50

< > **TROUBLE WITH GIRLS** 15 (Jacobs + Jones, Hamilton, Mann) "Lost City of Girls" pt 3 of 4. Lester Girls and co lost in a wild dinosaur jungle. Mature readers. B&W 32pgs \$2.25

FANTACO

< > **GORESHRIEK** Vol 2 no 2. Horror anthology comic + interview with *Fangoria* editor. B&W 32pgs \$2.50
< > **STROBE** 1 Multi-media magazine of popular culture. Gahan Wilson interview, *Yummy Fur*'s Chester Brown, Julie Adams (from *Black Lagoon*) interview \$4.95
< > **OFFICIAL SPLATTER MOVIE GUIDE** by John McCarty. Capsule reviews for over 400 gore movies. 50 b&w stills. PPBK, 6x9", B&W \$10.95

FANTAGRAPHICS

< > **LOVE & ROCKETS Bk 3: Las Mujeres Perdidas** (Los Bros Hernandez) Back in print, 3rd edition of complete L&R library, reprints issue 5-10. Deluxe edition is signed and limited. PPBK 8x11" 152pgs B&W \$13.95
HBK 8x11" 152pgs B&W \$35.00
DELUXE 8x11" 152pgs B&W \$45.00
< > **BILL SIENKIEWICZ SKETCH-BOOK**. Sketches from every phase of his career + notes and background info from BS on most of artwork, 8 full colour pages. Intro by Alan Moore. Deluxe edition signed & limited hbk. PPBK 9x12" 160pgs B&W \$19.95
HBK 9x12" 160pgs B&W \$34.95
DELUXE 9x12" 160pgs B&W \$39.95
< > **GET ME A TABLE WITHOUT FLIES, HARRY** (Bill Griffith). Zippy the Pinhead creator's sketchbook. Deluxe edition signed. PPBK 160pgs B&W \$14.95
DELUXE PPBK 160pgs B&W \$17.95
< > **THE COMPLETE CHEECH WIZARD** Vol 1 (Vaughn Bode) First of 2-album set to reprint all of the b&w strips + *National Lampoon* strips and all u/ground material on Cheech. Mature readers. PPBK, 8x11, 64pgs B&W \$7.95
< > **USAGI YOJIMBO** 23 (Stan Sakai) The samurai rabbit meets an aging samurai with a death wish, leads into next issue's conclusion. B&W 32pgs \$2.00
< > **LUST OF THE NAZI WEASEL WOMEN** 1 (Mitch Manzer) 8-issue maxi-series. Hitler's mind is in the body of a parrot to move unnoticed in his plans to enslave the world with his nazi weasel women. B&W 32pgs \$2.25
< > **GRAPHIC STORY MONTHLY** 6 (Rick Geary, Jack Jackson, etc) Anthology for mature readers. Magazine 48pgs B&W \$2.95
< > **SINNER** 5 "Life Ain't Easy, Baby" (Munoz + Sampayo) Bizarre interlude issue featuring creators within story. Magazine size 32pgs B&W \$3.50
< > **COMICS JOURNAL** 137 Steve Bissette & Scott McCloud on creators' rights. Plus Bill Sienkiewicz, *Vortex*'s Bill Marks, *Marvel*'s Steve Saffel. Bill Waterson vs Mort Walker on comic strip syndicates. B&W magazine \$3.95
< > **AMAZING HEROES** 180. Interview & overview: Timothy Truman. B&W \$3.50
< > **PRINCE VALIANT** 9: "Journey to the Misty Lales" (Hal Foster) PPBK, 10x13, 48pgs \$14.95

FIRST COMICS

SHIPPING APRIL 27

< > **BADGER** 63 (Baron + Butler) Badger discovers the Yak is behind mysterious events at local funeral parlour. 32pgs colour \$1.95
< > **LONE WOLF & CUB** 35 (Koike + Kojima) Ogami faces the aging Lord Yagyu of the Yagyu Clan. Mature readers. Squarebound. B&W 64pgs \$2.95
< > **NEXUS** 72 (Baron + Haynes, Baxa) New regular penciller, Hugh Haynes. Colour, 32pgs \$1.95

SHIPPING MAY 4

< > **MIKE GRELL'S SABLE** (Grell) reprint, new Tony Salmons cover. Colour, 32pgs \$1.75
< > **NEXUS LEGENDS** 17 (Baron + Shanower) Reprint with new cover, Jdah's vacation. Colour 32pgs \$1.75

SHIPPING MAY 18

< > **DREADSTAR** 58 (David + Calimee, Dvorak) Vanth reintegrates his fractured psyche, recovers his lost soulsword and moves to end the reign of Lord Palafox. Colour 32pgs \$1.95
< > **GRIMJACK** 74 (Ostrander + K Jones) Twilley escapes prison but the Major is waiting to shatter his life all over again. Plus Pt 5 of "Youngblood" (Ostrander + Pugh, Yale) Colour, 32pgs \$1.95

SHIPPING JUNE 15

< > **CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED** 11: *Rip Van Winkle* (Jeffrey Busch) Squarebound 48pgs colour \$3.75
< > **ELRIC: SAILOR ON THE SEAS OF FATE** Graphic Novel. Adapted from Moorcock story. Thomas + Gilbert, Freeman. Cover by P Craig Russell. PPBK, 8x11", 208pgs \$14.95
< > **MAZINGER GRAPHIC NOVEL** (Go Nagai). One of Japan's most famous manga artists. All new painted adventure of robot hero Mazinger. PPBK 9x10", 64pgs \$8.95

FLEETWAY/QUALITY COMICS

< > **NEW STATESMAN** 5 (John Smith + Sean Phillips) 48 painted colour pages from *Crisis*. Square bound. 48pgs colour \$3.95/£2.50
< > **NEMESIS THE WARLOCK** Limited Edition 8 (Mills + Talbot). Origin of Nemesis. Gueststars: ABC Warriors. B&W 32pgs \$1.95/95p
< > **PSI JUDGE ANDERSON** Limited Edition (Grover, Grant + Kitson) Search for Orlok continues. B&W 32 pages \$1.95/95p
< > **JUDGE DREDD** 44 (Grover + Robinson, Ron Smith) Colour 32pgs \$1.75/75p
< > **THE LAW OF DREDD** 14 Dredd faces his clone brother Rico. Colour 32pgs \$1.75/75p
< > **ROGUE TROOPER** 44 (John Smith + S Dillon) Colour, 32pgs \$1.75/75p
< > **2000AD SHOWCASE** 50 "Inferno", "Return to Armageddon", "Meltdown Man" continue. Colour 32pgs 75p

GLADSTONE

< > **WEIRD SCIENCE** 1 Gladstone's third EC reprint title. This repr of *Weird Science* 22 by Williamson, Wood, Evans, Orlando. Also repr of *Weird Fantasy* 13 (Wood, Kamen, Feldstein, Kurtzman). 64 page double size issue colour \$1.95

HARVEY COMICS

< > **RICHIE RICH** 250 Colour 32pgs \$1.00
< > **CASPER THE FRIENDLY GHOST** 256 colour 32pgs \$1.00
< > **RICHIE RICH AND CADBURY** 25 colour 32pgs \$1.00
< > **RICHIE RICH DIGEST** 23 \$1.75
< > **CASPER DIGEST** 14 \$1.75
< > **MILLION DOLLAR DIGEST** 15 colour \$1.75

INNOVATION COMICS

< > **HERO ALLIANCE SUPER-TEAM ANNUAL** 1 (David Lawrence + Paul Smith plus back ups by Campiti + Ingersoll and John Herbert) Mature readers. Colour \$2.75
< > **NEWSTRALIA** 5 (Sullivan + Herbert, Witherby) Brian, Boomer and No-Nux join the rebellion with their consignment of weapons. 32 pgs B&W \$2.25

JADEMAN COMICS

< > **THE BLOOD SWORD DYNASTY** 10 Kim Hung meets a legendary scholar and kung-fu expert. 36 pgs colour \$1.25
< > **ORIENTAL HEROES** 23 Gold Dragon is driven into the Global Horde assassins. Colour 68pgs \$1.95
< > **THE BLOOD SWORD** 23 Having slain Poison Killer, Hero and Monk must face the supreme fighter, Sword Saint. Colour 64pgs \$1.95
< > **DRUNKEN FIST** 23 Chek Fai must face the eternal Clan Leader and all his men, while Porky and Iron Law follow Red Beauty to the Mirror Palace. Colour 64pgs \$1.95
< > **THE FORCE OF BUDDHA'S PALM** 23 Devilito gets his revenge against Fairy Maiden, who previously tortured him. Colour 68pgs \$1.95

KITCHEN SINK

< > **LFL ABNER** Vol 9: 1943 Dailies (Al Capp) Continuing reprint series. PPBK 12x9" b&w \$16.95
HBK 12x9" b&w \$29.95
< > **BIZARRE HEROES** 1 (Donald Simpson) Creator of *Megaton* Man produces new super-hero comic, starring himself and a New Age guru against a clandestine cloning project. B&W \$2.50
< > **FANDOM CONFIDENTIAL** Collection of photo fumettis by Jim Engel, Chuck Fiala. Spoofs. Magazine format b&w \$2.95
< > **THE SPIRIT** 67 (Will Eisner) Four complete stories. B&W \$2.00

LAST GASP

< > **SLOW DEATH** 11 Eco-funnies by Alan Moore & Bryan Talbot, Greg Irons, etc. Adult. Nudity, sex, violence. B&W 32pgs \$2.50
< > **VISUAL ADDICTION: The Art of Robert Williams**. Zap artist Williams' most recent work in an all-new collection. Signed and numbered 300-500 copies. 32 colour plates + black & white. Adult, nudity. HBK 8x11", 110pgs \$55.00
< > **ZOMBIE MYSTERY PAINTINGS** New printing of Robt. Williams art collection. Adult. PPBK 8x11 \$19.95

COMING IN
APRIL

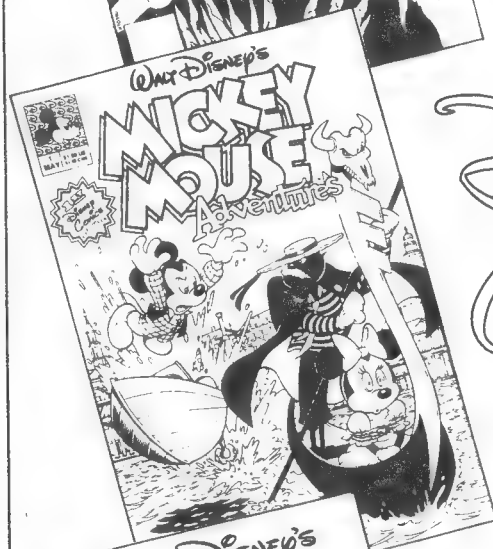
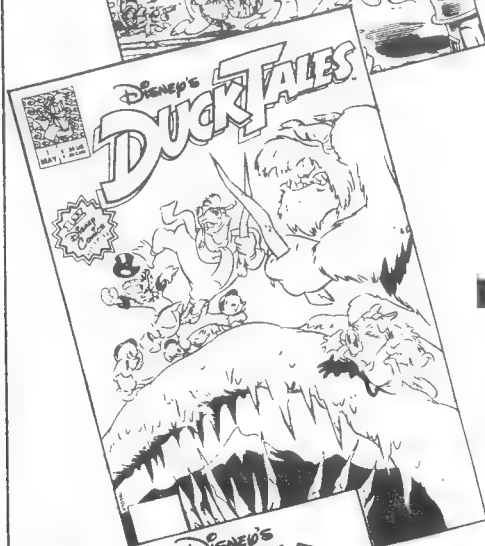
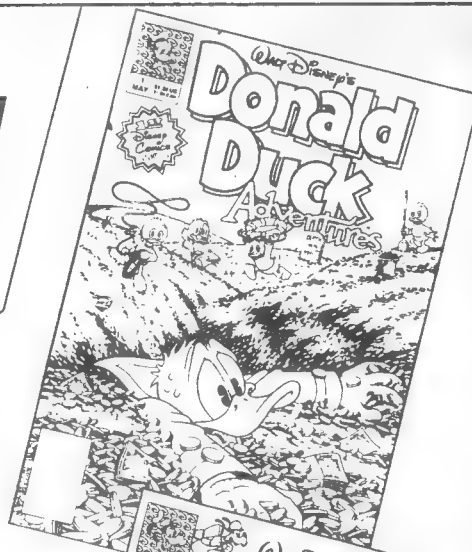
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FABULOUS
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COMICS

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WORLD'S MOST
POPULAR
CHARACTERS!

Disney
Comics

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THE START OF
SOMETHING
BIG!



MARVEL COMICS

SHIPPING MAY 1

< > **AVENGERS WEST COAST** 60 (Thomas + Ryan) Resolves "Dark Scarlet Witch" storyline begun by Byrne before his untimely departure. \$1.00/60p

< > **BLACK KNIGHT 2** (Thomas + Buckler, DeZuniga) Black Knight faces Dread Knight. Guest star Captain Britain. 2 of 4 \$1.50

< > **CAPTAIN AMERICA** 372 (Gruenwald + Lim, Bulanadi). "The Skull/Kingpin War" Part 1 of 6. Title goes fortnightly. Villains battle over cache of experimental drugs with Cap caught in the middle. \$1.00/60p

< > **CAMP CANDY 3** (DeCesare + Post, Roettcher) Camp Candy kids challenge nearby military school to war games. Colour \$1.00

< > **DAREDEVIL** 282 (Nocenti + Romita Jr, Williamson) Concludes DD-Inhumans story, as DD decides to return to NY. Ctr 32pgs \$1.00/60p

< > **ELSEWHERE PRINCE** (Moebius, Lofficiers + Shanower) Moebius's mystic fantasy continues. Issue 3 of 6. Colour 32pgs \$1.95

< > **CRITICAL MASS 6** (Chichester, Clark + Various) Shadowline Saga continues. 7 issue series. Colour 64 pages \$4.95

< > **ALF ANNUAL 3** (Gallagher, Manak, M Severin). Anthology of ALF stories incl "New Age Melmutant Abstract Turtles". Colour 64pgs \$2.00

< > **INCREDIBLE HULK vs WOLVERINE** Special Edition (Wein + Trimpe, Abel) Hulk 180-181 reprinted in bookshelf format. Colour 48pgs \$4.95

< > **MARVEL COMICS** 53 Wolverine (3 of 3), Comet Man (4 of 4), Stingray (1 of 4), Black Widow and Silver Sable. 32pgs \$1.25/65p

< > **NAMOR THE SUB-MARINER** 4 (Byrne + Wiacek) Namor deals with NY harbour oil slick. 32pgs colour \$1.00

< > **SHE HULK** 17 (Gerber + Hitch, Sanders) "Cosmic Squish Principle" Part 4 (of 4). Shulkie and Howard the Duck attempt to stop Dr Angst from creating a New Universe. Plus return of Golden Age hero, The Terror. 32pgs \$1.50

< > **STALKERS 4** (Strnad + Verheiden, Texeira, Mayerik) A stalker franchisee discovers political corruption. Plus Lt Mazzuli visits a psychic Stalker and is attacked by a psychopath. 32pgs \$1.50

< > **STEELTOWN ROCKERS** 4 (of 6) (E Lee + Leialoha) Rockers get their first gig but may face doom first. 32pgs \$1.00

< > **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN** 66 (Conway + Suviak, K Williams) Green Goblin returns — as a hero — to help Spidey against Molten Man and Tombstone. 32pgs \$1.00/60p

< > **WHAT THE?! 8** (Various) "Return of Forbush Man", "Goon Knight" etc. No ads. \$1.25

< > **SILVER SURFER "The Enslavers"** Graphic Novel (Stan Lee + Pollard, Rubinstein) Guest stars almost everybody. A space tyrant enslaves Earth, with only to Surfer to save it. HBK 8x11 64pg colour \$16.95

< > **X-MEN** 263 (Claremont + Dwyer, Green) Forge has to save Banshee & Marvel Girl from the madmen who have turned them into Morlocks. Fortnightly schedule for summer months. \$1.00/60p

< > **X-MEN: Days of Future Past Bookshelf Format Edition** (Claremont + Byrne, Austin) New printing

of classic **X-Men** 141-2 story. PPBK 7x10" 48pgs colour \$4.95

< > **X-MEN: The Savage Land Trade Paperback** (Claremont + Golden, Cockrum, Paul Smith) New printing of reprint of **Marvel Fanfare** 1-4 story co-starring Spider-Man and Ka-Zar. PPBK 7x10" 80pgs Colour \$9.95

< > **X-MEN: Asgardian Wars Trade Paperback** (Claremont + Paul Smith, Art Adams) New printing of reprint of X-Men & Alpha Flight mini-series plus New Mutants Special Edition 1 and X-Men Annual 9. PPBK 7x10" 224pgs clr \$14.95

SHIPPING MAY 8

< > **ALF** 31 (Gallagher + Manak, M Severin) Colour 32pgs \$1.00

< > **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN** 334 (Michelinie + Larsen, Machlan) "The Sinister Six" Pt 1 (of 6) story to run through next six fortnightly issues. Doc Octopus reunites with Mysterio, Elektro, Vulture, Sandman and Hobgoblin. Spidey faces each across the series, then the whole group en masse. 32pgs clr \$1.00/60p

< > **AVENGERS SPOTLIGHT** 34 (Gerber + Milgrom, Heck) Hawkeye's war on Hollywood gangs continues. Plus USAgent back-up. \$1.00/60p

< > **HEATHCLIFF** 49 (DeCesare + Severin, Roettcher) \$1.00

< > **NEW MUTANTS** 91 (L Simonson + Liefeld, Barta) New Mutants battle Apocalypse's newest hellhound Caliban. \$1.00/60p

< > **GROO** 67 (Aragones with Evanier) 32pgs colour \$1.00

< > **NTH MAN** 14 (Hama + Wagner, Fredericks) Mutant armies are taking over Midwest plus hostile aliens hit Earth. \$1.00

< > **QUASAR** 12 (Gruenwald + Manley, Bulanadi) Quasar visits Lemuria and faces Tutinax the Deviant. 32pgs colour \$1.00/60p

< > **ALPHA FLIGHT** 86 (Hudnai + Bagley, Manley) Team up with Dr Strange for final showdown for fate of reality. Expect serious results, as new creative team start next issue. 32pgs clr \$1.50

< > **GHOST RIDER** 3 (Mackie + Saltares, Texiera) GR clashes with Nightwalker and the Kingpin. Colour, 32pgs \$1.50

< > **SAGA OF THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH** 4 (of 4) (R & D Thomas + Buckler, Bulanadi) Torch's adventures end with Korean War and apparent end to his life in the 1950s. 32pgs clr \$1.50

< > **WOLVERINE** 26 (Duffy + Janson) Logan returns to Japan to deal with betrayal. Title goes fortnightly for next six issues over summer months. \$1.75

< > **FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL** 23 (W Simonson + Guice) "Days of Future Present" Part 1 (of 4) Adult Franklin Richards journeys back to present to inform Rachel that her presence has done nothing to alter their dark future. Shock effect on FF to discover future of Earth and their son. Story continues in **X-Factor Annual** 5. \$2.00

< > **PUNISHER MAGAZINE** 12 (Baron + Portacio, Williams) Repr of **Punisher** 17 & 18, with Kingpin battle reaching a conclusion. B&W 60pgs \$2.25

< > **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN** 175 (Arcudi + Gil) Conan has demonic sword trying to steal his soul. Magazine B&W \$2.25/95p

< > **MARVEL SUPER HEROES**

2 2nd quarterly issue features: Iron Man (Ditko), Tigra (Chichester, Clark, Patton, DeCarlo), Falcon (Fingerroth + Saltares), Red Wolf (Campanella + Alexander), Rogue (Flaxman, Manna & Albrecht), Speedball (Ditko, Bright & DeCarlo), Daredevil (Kavanagh & Turner). Colour, 80pgs \$2.95

< > **TOMORROW KNIGHTS** 2 (Richardson + Whigham) The Tomorrow Knights are called in to recapture a volcanic energy facility taken over by terrorists. Colour, 32pgs \$1.50

< > **PLASTIC FORKS** 4 (Ted McKeever) While scientist Henry Apt continues his search for the ones responsible for attaching his own asexual reproduction device to him, Angel attempts to free Henry's wife before she is forced to deliver Henry's baby. Mature readers. Colour 64pgs (4 of 5) \$4.95

SHIPPING MAY 15

< > **AVENGERS** 319 (Nicieza + Ryan, Palmer) "The Crossing Line" Pt 1 (of 6) Avengers team up with Alpha Flight and Soviet Super Soldiers to recover a lost Soviet submarine, and must deal with the Atlantians to avert World War 3. Colour \$1.00/60p

< > **CAPTAIN AMERICA** 373 (Gruenwald + Lim, Bulanadi) "Skull vs Kingpin War" Pt 2 (of 6) Cap is accidentally injected with new designer drug. Guests: Bullseye, Crossbones and Diamondback. 32 pages colour \$1.00/60p

< > **GI JOE** 102 (Hama + Bright, Emberlin) Joe and Oktober Guard run into headhunters. 32 pgs \$1.00

< > **CONAN** 234 (Higgins + Lim, Adkins) New Direction continues as Young Conan joins an army for first time — to stop them destroying a friend's village. \$1.00

< > **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY** 2 (Valentino + Montano) Guardians learn how the race known as The Stark came to base their civilisation on Iron Man. Firelord guests. Colour 32pgs \$1.00

< > **INCREDIBLE HULK** 271 (David + Keown, McLeod) Doctor Strange & Namor take on a possessed Hulk. Plus Bruce Banner reunited with his wife. \$1.00/60p

< > **MARVEL AGE** 90 features preview of Todd McFarlane's all-new **Spider-Man** title, plus **Foolkiller** limited series and Epic's **Wild Cards** comics adaptations. Colour 32pgs \$1.00

< > **MARVEL TALES** 239 (Wolfman, Mantlo + S Buscema, Esposito) Reprints **Marvel Team-Up** 38, Spidey & The Beast vs The Griffin. Back-up Peter Porker Batman movie spoof. Colour 32pgs \$1.00

< > **PUNISHER** 35 (Baron + Reinhold, Farmer) "Jigsaw Puzzle" Pt 1 (of 6) Punisher involved in war on drugs in Colombia. Guest Jigsaw (from Limited Series) Fortnightly. Colour 32pgs \$1.00

< > **SILVER SURFER** 39 (A Grant + J Sherman) Fill-in issue, one off story of deadly games of alien race who perceive war as a contest. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/60p

< > **X-MEN** 264 (Claremont + ?) Genoshan Press Gang invade US to capture Colossus. 32 pgs Colour \$1.00/60p

< > **MARVEL COMICS** 54 Wolverine vs Hulk Pt 1 of 8 (Higgins + Ross), Werewolf by Night Pt 1 of 6 (Kaminski + Fry, Joyce) Stingray Pt 2 of 4 (Wein + Fern, DeCarlo), Shroud complete by Ditko + Bright. 32pgs \$1.25/65p

< > **WHAT IF?** 15 (Herdling + Kwapisz) "What If Wolverine Fought Conan?" Story takes the unlikely pair from the Hyborian Age to the modern world, with each trying to deal with the other's realm. Guests Red Sonja, Phoenix and the X-Men. 32pgs colour \$1.25

< > **HERO** 3 (Michelinie + Purcell, Delarosa). Cody Pace and his companions face Gaalen Piecekeeper, a fierce warrior who keeps pieces of defeated foes as trophies. Jabot must sacrifice an eye to further the cause, and Cody must die a second time. Upon his death he is transported to another world and one step closer in his quest for the true meaning of heroism, and a return to Earth. 6-part mini-series. Colour 32pgs \$1.50

< > **ROBOCOP** 5 (Grant + Sullivan, DeMulder) RoboCop is "borrowed" from the Delta City project to intervene in the Spain - North Africa war. Special modifications are made for combat. 32pgs clr \$1.50

< > **SHIELD** 13 (Harris + Pollard, De Mulder) "The Hydra Affair" Pt 2 of 3. Fury and agents track down the newly reformed Hydra and launch an all-out assault on their base. Ctr. 32pgs \$1.50

< > **EXCALIBUR** 24 (Claremont + Davis, Neary) "The Cross Time Caper" Part 14. Last issue for UK art team as heroes return to Earth and Kitty celebrates her 15th birthday with Cap Britain's nemesis Saturnine. \$1.75/75p

< > **X-FACTOR ANNUAL** 5 (L. Simonson + Bogdanove) "Days of Future Present" Pt 2 of 4. Follows **FF Annual** 23, with FF and Phoenix guest starring. Jean Grey meets her 'daughter' Rachel. 48 pgs colour \$2.00

< > **DEATHLOK** 1 (of 4) (McDuffie + Wright, Guice, S Williams) Pacifist Michael Collins is tricked into working for the 'Deathlok Project' headed by Harlan Ryker of Roxxon Corporation. Ryker has Collins killed and turned into the prototype Deathlok. Issues 1 & 2 have art by Jackson Guice, with 3 & 4 by ex-**Question** artist Denys Cowan. Bookshelf format. Colour, 48 pages \$3.95

< > **NIGHTBREED** 4 (John Wagner & Alan Grant + Jim Baikie) Conclusion of adpt of Clive Barker's **Nightbreed** movie as Aaron is caught in a final confrontation between humanity and the monstrous Nightbreed. Title to continue with all-new material, bi-monthly. Mature readers. Colour 32pgs \$1.95

SHIPPING MAY 22

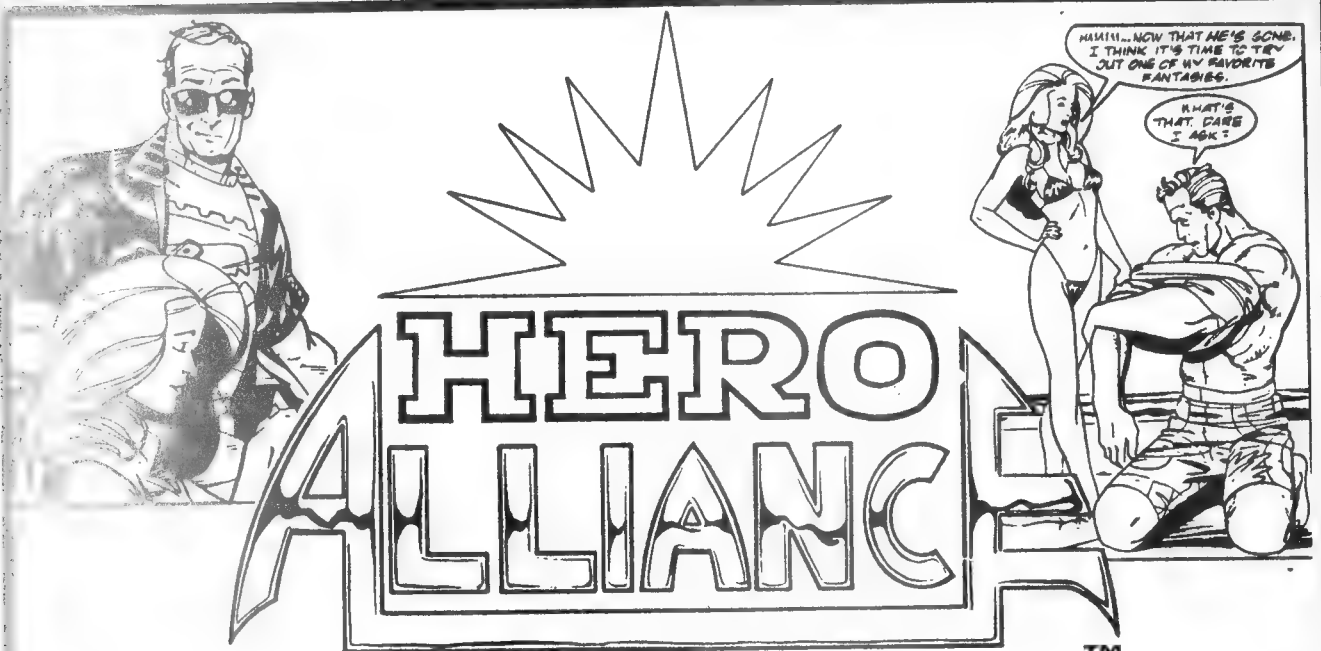
< > **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN** 335 (Michelinie + Larsen) "Sinister Six" Part 2 of 6. Guest stars Captain America. Ctr 32pgs \$1.00/60p

< > **COUNT DUCKULA** 12 (Gallagher + Haller, Roettcher) Parody of "Lifestyles of the Rich & Famous" Colour, 32pgs \$1.00

< > **FANTASTIC FOUR** 342 (Walt Simonson) FF return to Earth — or so it seems — until they see that Dan Quayle is president, Glasnost is an empty dream and World War 3 is on the verge of becoming a reality. 32pgs \$1.00/60p

< > **IRON MAN** 258 (John Byrne, Romita Jr) "Armour Wars 2" Pt 2 (of ?) John Byrne has committed to writing the "Armour Wars 2" storyline, a proposed epic adventure. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/60p

< > **NEW WARRIORS** 1 (Nicieze + Bagley, Williamson) Avengers guest star as New Warriors (Night



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INNOVATION

TM

Thrasher, Nova, Namorita, Firestar, Speedball & Marvel Boy) tackle old FF foe Terrax the Tamer. Plus the secret of how Richard Rider regained his Nova powers. Colour 32pgs \$1.00

< > **SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN** 166 (Conway + S Buscema) Mobwar in New York between the Kingpin, the Chameleon, Hammerhead and Tombstone while Spidey visits England to avenge the Arrangers death at the hands of Fogg & Knight. 32pgs colour \$1.00/60p

< > **THOR** 419 (DeFalco + Frenz, Sinnott) "The Black Galaxy Saga" Pt 1 of 6. Fortnightly scheduling as Thor and Hercules take on the High Evolutionary and the awesome Celestials in the heart of the mysterious Black Galaxy. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/60p

< > **TRANSFORMERS** 68 (Furman + ?) Mutants and superhumans are recruited to fight the Decepticons. New super-team created this issue. Colour 32pgs \$1.00

< > **X-FACTOR** 56 (David + Shoemaker) Peter David, writer of **The Hulk** starts this month as new series writer, as Infecta returns and the Beast gets a shot at revenge. Colour 32pgs \$1.00/60p

< > **X-MEN CLASSICS** 49 (Claremont + Cockrum, Rubenstein) Reprints **X-Men** 145 with Arcade and Dr Doom at odds. \$1.25

< > **POWER PACK** 57 (Higgins + Morgan, Mushynsky) Franklin seeks Galactus to obtain the ultimate nullifier, as the Pack battles Starstalker. \$1.50

< > **WOLVERINE** 27 (Duffy + Buscema, Green) "The Lazarus Project" Pt 1 of 4. Fortnightly scheduling. Cover price change. 32pgs colour \$1.75

< > **NEW MUTANTS ANNUAL** 6 (L Simonson + Shoemaker, Barta) "Days of Future Present" Pt 3 of 4. The New Mutants get a glimpse of their future, and deal with the apparent connection between their leader Cable and the Sentinel sleeper, Ahab (from **FF Annual** 23) \$2.00

< > **PUNISHER ARMOURY** 1 (Eliot Brown) A reference edition, featuring new and reprint material from **Punisher War Journals** describing the many types of weapons the Punisher uses. 32pgs clr \$1.50

< > **ROBOCOP 1 MOVIE SPECIAL** (Harris + Saltares, Kupperberg, DeZuniga) Reprint of the original **RoboCop** movie adaptation which was in magazine format. Now bookshelf format. 48pgs clr \$4.95

< > **MARVEL COMICS** 55: **Wolverine vs Hulk** Pt 2 of 8 (Higgins + Ross), **Werewolf by Night** Pt 2 of 6 (Kaminski + Fry, Joyce), **Stingray** Part 3 of 4 (Wein + Fern, DeCarlo), **The Collective Man** (Lobdell + LaRocque). 32pgs clr \$1.25/65p

< > **DOCTOR STRANGE** 19 (R & D Thomas + Guice) The Doctor must accept the role of "ghost-buster" when a malicious spirit threatens Manhattan. 32pgs colour \$1.50

< > **THE NAM** 46 (Murray + Vansant, DeZuniga) During the invasion of Cambodia, a seasoned marine tries to stay alive while breaking in a new recruit. 32pgs colour \$1.50

< > **PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL** 20 (Poots + T Smith) On a tiny Pacific island, Pun falls into the middle of a guerilla war and must battle a man to whom he owes his life. 32pgs colour \$1.50

< > **MOON KNIGHT** 16 (Dixon + Velluto, Palmer) "The Trial of Marc Spector" Pt 2 of 4. The

murder trial begins. 32pgs clr \$1.50

< > **X-MEN ANNUAL** 14 (Claremont + A Adams) "Days of Future Present" Part 4 of 4. Concludes this month's annuals storyline, guests FF, X-Factor, Excaliber's Phoenix, New Mutants. \$2.00

< > **CONAN SAGA** 40 (Thomas + J Buscema, DeZuniga) "The Amra Saga" Pt 3 of 4. Reprints from **Savage Sword** 26 & 39. B&W magazine format \$2.25

< > **THE DESTROYER** 10 (Murray + Ditko, Weeks) Two complete stories A deranged psycho is killing people by dropping pennies on them from a great height; and brutal drive-by gang shootings are on the increase. Enter Remo and Chiun. 48pgs B&W, mag \$2.25

< > **ARIKA** 21 (Otoma) Tetsuo's growing dependence on drugs to control his powers causes a rift between him and Akira, while the Great Tokyo Empire launches an attack on Lady Miyako's temple. Mature readers (violence) Clr \$3.95

< > **DR DOOM & DR STRANGE** **Graphic Novel** (Stern + Mignola, Badger) A paperback version of the sold-out hardcover. Doom takes on Strange for the mantle of Sorcerer Supreme. Strange helps Doom retrieve his mother's soul from Mephisto. 64pgs, clr 8x11" PPBK \$9.95

MIRAGE STUDIOS

< > **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES** 32 (Bode, Eastman & Talbot) Mark Bode and Bryan Talbot team up with co-creator Kevin Eastman this issue. B&W \$1.75

< > **TURTLE SOUP** 1 All-new full colour anthology with Donald Simpson, Michael Dooney, Rick McCollum, Bill Anderson, Jeff Bonivert, Stephen Murphy, Brian Zulli. (Different to original **Turtle Soup** 1 of several years ago) 32pgs colour \$1.95

< > **TMNT MOVIE PARODY** (Mark Martin) **Gnatrat** creator Martin does for Dark Knight; savages them with an on-the-mark parody of their new film. Prestige format. B&W 48pgs \$3.33

< > **THE COLLECTED TMNT** 3. Trade paperback reprint of **Turtles** 15, 16 & 17. 3 of 5 PPBK, 7x10" 100pgs B&W \$6.95

< > **PUMA BLUES** 26 (Murphy + Zulli) black & white 32pgs \$1.75

NORTHSTAR

< > **SPLATTER** 1. Blood & guts anthology includes serialised female versions of **Frankenstein**, **Dracula** and the **Wolfman** by Tim "Faust" Vigil. Mature readers. 32pgs B&W \$2.25

< > **AMY PAPUDA** 1 (M Pearlstein) Ugly ridiculed schoolgirl goes on rampage. Violent and unsettling mini series (1 of 4). Adult material. 32pgs B&W \$2.25

NOW COMICS

SHIPPING MAY 25

< > **THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS** 25 (Van Hise + Grahame, Brozman) Ghostbusters called in to rescue a research team who have passed through a dimensional portal into the wilds of Asia. 32pgs clr \$1.75

< > **SPEED RACER** 36 (Piron + Dwyer, B Thomas) Ace Deucey's Supercar can outdo Speed's Mach

5 on all fronts. The challenge is on. Colour 32pgs \$1.75

< > **GREEN HORNET** 11 (Fortier + Butler, Mowry) Mishi Kato has been transferred to Switzerland leaving the Green Hornet without his Kato, or is he? 32pgs clr \$1.75

< > **GREEN HORNET SPECIAL Mini-Series** 1 (of 2) TV's Green Hornet, Van Williams, makes his comic book debut as writer of the ultimate Green Hornet adventure. Fully painted artwork by Dell Barras. \$1.75

< > **SUPERCOPS** 1 (Dixon + E Newell) America under seige, crime and corruption are rampant. Enter the Supercops; genetically enhanced men and women, programmed to fight crime from birth — at all costs. Special double-size debut issue. 48pgs clr \$2.75

SHIPPING JUNE 1

< > **THE TERMINATOR: Special Mini-Series** 2 (Dixon + Villagran) John Connor and Kyle Reese have stumbled upon Skynet's secret experiments with time travel, and they have to fight their way into the base to prevent Skynet from sending Terminators back in time. The exciting conclusion to this two part prequel to the Terminator movie. 32pgs clr \$1.75

< > **ALIAS** 3 "Firestorm" (Dixon + Fox, E Villagran) Alias kills the Secretary of State and now the men who hired him want him silenced. 32pgs clr \$1.75

< > **MARRIED: WITH CHILDREN** 4 (LLewellyn, Schwartz, Mowry) Al, Steve and Bud go fishing and end up stranded in the wilderness with a sex-starved crazy woman and nothing to eat but beer. Meanwhile, back home Peg, Kelly and Marcy wind up in jail for disturbing the peace and indecent exposure. 32pgs colour \$1.75

< > **FRIGHT NIGHT** 23 (Piron + West, Stangeland) Charley and Peter battle harpies when the she-creatures terrorise the city. Colour 32pgs \$1.75

< > **SLIMER** 17 (Parr + Braun) Prof. Dweeb stumbles upon an ancient book that claims green ghost slime is the last ingredient needed to create gold. Back up Real Ghostbusters story, activity pages and a poster. 32pgs clr \$1.75

< > **RALPH SMART** 24 (Harc Hansen) 3-D issue as Ralph comes up against the Hydra-Eyed Love Beat and Dr Goot. (3-D glasses included) 32pgs \$2.95

SHIPPING JUNE 15

< > **TERMINATOR: The Burning Earth Trade Paperback** (Fortier + Ross) Reprint ofentire Burning Earth story, **Terminator** 1-5, in which John Connor and his ragtag band of soldiers battle Skynet for the ultimate fate of mankind. PPBK 7x10" clr \$9.95

PAGE ONE, INC.

< > **COMIC RELIEF** 13. Monthly collections of strips: **Doonesbury**, **Calvin & Hobbes**, **The Far Side** and political cartoons from around US. B&W mag 68pgs \$2.50

PIONEER COMICS

< > **PHANTOM** 3 Never before reprinted Phantom stories in a squarebound limited series (3 of 4) B&W 32pgs \$6.95

< > **PHANTOM SPECIAL EDITION** 3. New collection of Sunday strips. PPBK, 3 of 3, B&W \$14.95

< > **THE MAGICAL MICHAEL JACKSON** (Hal Schuster) A look at the career of the enigmatic and unusual superstar. PPBK, 8x11" 100pgs+ B&W \$9.95

< > **CALLING DICK TRACY** (James Van Hise) A look at the Dick Tracy phenomenon, comics, serials, collectables, etc. PPBK 8x11", 164pgs B&W \$14.95

< > **SUPERMARIONATION** A detailed overview of the Gerry Anderson puppet shows. PPBK 8x11" 200+pgs B&W \$17.95

PIRANHA PRESS

< > **WHY I HATE SATURN** **Graphic Album** (Kyle Baker) Shadow artist supreme on the story of two sisters, Anne and Laura. Anne is a successful columnist and writer, and Laura — the Queen of the Leather **AstroGirls** from Saturn — is the sane one. Laura is in trouble, somebody wants her dead, so Anne steps in to help. Mature readers. PPBK 208pgs B&W \$14.95

< > **INVADERS FROM HOME** 2 (of 6) (John Blair Moore) Dealing with a baby, Bobby and Bee Boomer are the parents, and Dad seems to have adapted pretty well with his two year old daughter. Until his teenage niece moves in! Colour 32pgs \$2.50

< > **BEAUTIFUL STORIES FOR UGLY CHILDREN** 13 (Louapre + Sweetman) Sequel to issue 1 with clown and bride, a kind hearted woman with two heads. Their quest for happiness continues to be plagued in their married life. Mature readers. B&W 40pgs \$2.50

SLAVE LABOR

< > **ONE-FISTED TALES** 1. This new "adults only" humour anthology features science fiction, action, adventure and SEX. Shipped in plain brown wrapper. B&W \$2.50

< > **THE JAM** 4 (Bernie Mireault) The Jammer continues his struggle with the Flarks. All this and the Devil too. B&W 32pgs \$2.25

SPECIAL STUDIO

< > **HEROES FROM WORDSMITH** 1 (of 3) (Darrigo + R G Taylor) A different hero from the pages of **Wordsmith** each issue, as Clay Washburn takes a back seat to his creations. This time, Hunter Hawke WW1 fighter ace. B&W \$2.50

SPIDERBABY

< > **TABOO** 2 — 2nd printing. All-star collection of adult horror: Alan Moore + Eddie Campbell "From Hell" Chapter 1; Stephen Bissette, S Clay Wilson, Paul Chadwick, and others. Superior binding to first edition. Adult material. PPBK, 7x10" 144pg B&W \$9.95

THE 3-D ZONE

< > **TEX BENSON** 1 (Chuck Roblin) In the style of Williamson, Frazetta and Raymond, light-hearted space adventures with Tex Benson. B&W 28pgs \$2.50

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< > **LEGEND OF ZELDA 1** (Caragonne, Layton, Zorito). Based on Nintendo adventure game. 2 strips plus feature pages. 32pgs colour \$1.95
< > **SUPER MARIO BROS 2** Two strips based on Nintendo video game. 32pgs colour \$1.95
< > **CAPTAIN N: The Game Master** 1. Two strips plus features, "Kid Icarus" and "Metroid", with Kevin being summoned to Videoland to help its inhabitants. Colour 32pgs \$1.95

VIZ COMICS

< > **BAOH 6** (Hirohiko Araki) Mutants and martial arts from Japan. Eight-issue series. B&W 48pgs \$2.95
< > **HOROBI 3** (Yoshihisa Tagami) Dream monsters attack again, with a 600-foot beast ripping up the countryside. Mature readers. Eight part series. B&W 80pg \$3.75
< > **LUM Graphic Novel 2** (Rumiko Takahashi) Humour volume collecting the 1st series of Lum plus a new strip "Ain't He Sweet" PPK, 212pgs B&W \$14.95

< > **COBRA 4** (Buichi Teresawa) 12 issue series. Cobra and Cathy escape from Schultz's prison, but are still being tracked. B&W 48pgs \$2.95
< > **CRYING FREEDOM 8** (Koike + Ikegami) Up against Yakuza killers, concluding part of 8 issue mini-series. Adult material B&W 64pgs \$3.50

VORTEX COMICS

< > **MISTER X Vol 2, 14** (Morgan, D'Israeli, Hoewczynski) Second part of "Radiant City" story. B&W 32pgs \$2.50
< > **DOC CHAOS 1** (Thorpe + Sampson, R Hughes) This is Dave Thorpe's popular character of the '80s now getting exposure in its new North American home of Canada's Vortex. Dave Thorpe being an early scripter for Alan Davis on **Captain Britain**. Story is set in the near future of Britain, with Doc Chaos trying to stop the corporations. Monthly. Colour 32pgs \$3.00
< > **BADLANDS 1** (S Grant + Giranno) New monthly telling the story behind the slaying of President Kennedy in 1963. Mature readers. Colour 32pgs \$3.00

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RETAIL index

Abbreviations used:

- imp** = US air imported issues
back = back issues in stock
fnzs = fanzines
merch = comics-related items (T-shirts, posters, toys, games, etc)
ind = US independent comics (not generally available in newsagents)
Brit = British comics
Frng = Foreign language titles
u/gs = underground comics
ppbks = comics related paperbacks in stock
hbks = comics related hardbacks in stock
m/o = mail order service also available
STO = standing order reservation service
RPG = fantasy role-playing games in stock

LONDON

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AT THE SIGN OF THE DRAGON, 131-133 Sheen Lane, London SW14. Mon - Sat 10am - 6pm, excl Wed 10am - 1.30pm. (imp, back, fnzs, ind, Brit, frng, ppbs, m/o, STO, fantasy & sf, children's books) 01 876 3855

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COMIC SHOWCASE, 76 Neal Street, London WC2. Mon - Sat 10am - 6pm, exc Thurs 10am - 7pm, Sun 12 - 5pm. (imp, back, fnzs, merch, ind, u/gs, Brit, ppbs, hbks, cartoon bks, original artwork) 01 240 3664

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LA PAGE, 7 Harrington Road, South Kensington, London SW7 3ES. Mon - Fri 9am - 6pm; Sat 10am - 5pm. (French language specialist: comics, magazines, hbks, stationery, m/o) Fax: 01 225 2662 Tel: 01 589 5991

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CALAMITY COMICS, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2RH. Mon - Sat 9.30am - 6pm. (imp, back, fnzs, merch, ind, u/gs, Brit, frng, ppbks, hbks, m/o, videos, STO) 01 427 3831

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CARTOON SHOP, 21-22 Talza Way, Lower Ground Floor, Victoria Circus Centre, Southend, Essex.

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THE EDGE OF FOREVER, Units 14 & 15, Bexleyheath Shopping Hall, 45 Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent. Mon - Sat (excl Wed) 10am - 5pm (imp, back, fnzs, merch, ind, Brit, MO, STO, portfolios) 01-303 5099

ENIGMA; THE GATEWAY, Croydon Indoor Market, 7 Park Street, Croydon, Surrey. Mon - Sat 9am - 5.30/6.00pm (imp, back, fnzs, merch, ind, u/gs, Brit, ppbks, RPG, STO)

FORBIDDEN PLANET, 29 Sydney Sreet, Brighton, Sussex.

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RAINBOW'S END, 78a Cowley Road, Oxford.

THEY WALK AMONG US, 30 Union Court, Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey.

VIRGIN MEGASTORE, 157-161 Western Road, Brighton.

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MIDLANDS

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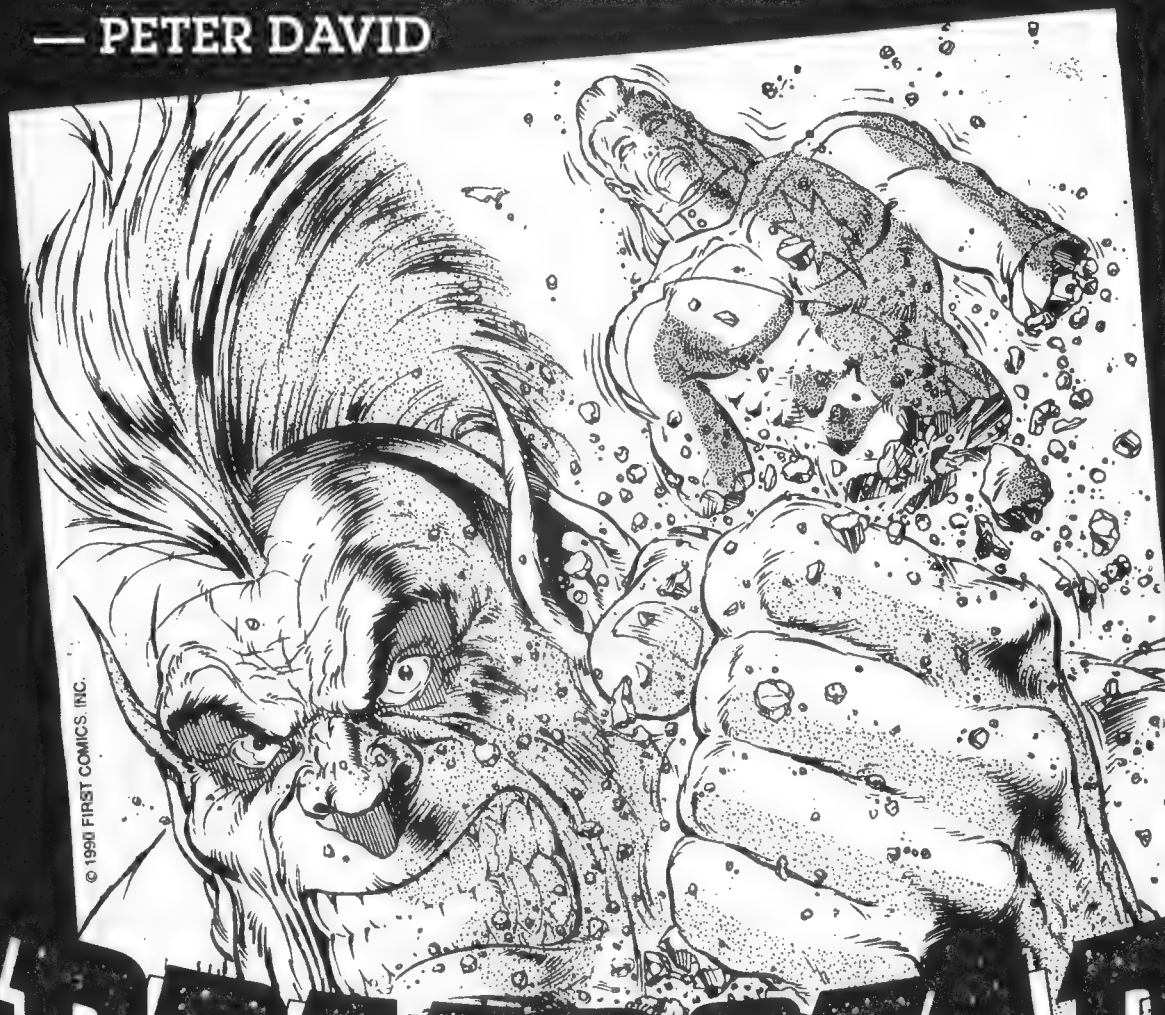
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DIRECT SALE

Birth of an industry

Few would disagree that the last decade has seen the most sweeping changes in the history of the comics medium. Not unlike the music industry, the 1970s creators of comics found the breakthroughs of the '60s a tough act to follow, resulting in directionless and derivative end products. No one knew what the next trend would be, and new titles generally failed to pass the sixth issue. But though the mainstream giants of the industry seemed content to duplicate old themes to an evershrinking audience, several new approaches, generally overlooked at the time, began to take shape into something which would ultimately transform the entire industry.

Despite the comic book market being generally considered American, it was an outspoken young Canadian who could best be considered the first of the new generation of 'ground-level' independent comics publishers. Following the tradition of the 1960s American underground comix, Dave Sim became a one-man show, writing drawing and publishing his own comic, *Cerebus the Aardvark* in December 1977. This 2000 print run first issue, a spoof of Barry Smith's work on *Conan The Barbarian* for Marvel Comics, now sells for over \$500 a copy, and the title is still being published — complete with misspelt name.

Fantasy Quarterly was a shortlived 1978 title, managing only one issue before its owners, Independent Publishers Syndicate went out of business. But this one issue had included a fantasy strip, *Elfquest* by Wendy & Richard Pini who quickly completed a second story, publishing it themselves as *Elfquest 2*. They went back a year later to reprint the first story as *Elfquest 1*. This 21 issue series ran from 1978 until 1985, subsequently reprinted in colour by Marvel.

Though America seemed oblivious to the fact, Europe had been printing album collections of humour and adventure strips since the 1950s. Top quality colour titles these, with cover prices high enough to guarantee good retail exposure, and an older audience than the weekly source editions. So it was considered quite revolutionary when, in 1978, Eclipse Graphic Albums were launched by young American brothers Jan & Dean Mullaney. They were considered to be responsible for publishing the first 'graphic novel', as they have since come to be more pretentiously known. *Sabre* provided an outlet for the talents of writer Don McGregor and artist Paul Gulacy, allowing them more time than the breakneck pace of their monthly work on *Killraven* and *Master of Kung Fu* for Marvel. But,

far more important, they had an opportunity to earn royalties, previously unknown in American comics. Young cult creators both, their efforts went largely unnoticed in a market dominated by the traditional comic book size four colour superhero fare.

But the lack of effective regular distribution of colour comics through newsstands had already led to a growing number of specialist shops, buying titles direct from specialist distributors (initially only Phil Seuling's Seagate company) on a non-returnable basis.

This provided the outlets for Eclipse to distribute *Sabre*, and did not go unnoticed by mainstream giant DC Comics who released the first-ever direct sale, non-newsstand colour comic in 1980. Quite how the market took hold is a mystery when you consider this first attempt was an almost total reprint *Superboy Spectacular*. Today, this ground-breaking non-event in mint condition commands the Price Guide value of \$1.00.

Eclipse, meanwhile, had reprinted *Sabre* (1979), and followed with a second album *Night Music* later the same year, but it took a second new small publisher, Pacific Comics, to try the DC four colour, comic size approach, adding new material to the formula by mainstream giant Jack Kirby. But while Kirby had been responsible for many of the top comics ideas of the 1940s, 1950s,

Many people believe that without the Direct Sale market, comic books would be only a fading memory. Dez Skinn looks back at the origins of a 1970s phenomenon.

and 1960s, by 1981 his ideas, dialogue and art seemed a poor parody of his former greatness. **Captain Victory and the Galactic Rangers** did not set the world on fire. To their credit though, Pacific stuck with it, and published twelve more issues and a Special through to 1984, before accepting defeat.

Wisely sticking with big name contributors, who had already earned large followings through Marvel and DC, Pacific launched **Starslayer** (excessive blood and gore from Mike Grell, September, 1981), **Rog-2000** (John Byrne's Charlton strips reprinted, June 1982) and **Ms Mystic** (Neal Adams ultimate cliff-hanger — a 17-month gap between issues one and two, October 1982 and February, 1984).

Sadly, Pacific made the fatal mistake of rapid over-expansion which, coupled with their erratic scheduling led to their collapse in early 1984. But by this time they had successfully created a new market and had a wide range of titles, many of which were continued by Eclipse Comics who now had their own expanding line of colour comics.

Another of the new Seagate-style direct sale distributors attempted the Pacific move of being a publisher and distributor when they launched **Nexus** (June, 1981), **Badger** (Oct, 1983) and **Whisper** (Dec, 1983). But Capital quickly pulled out after six, four and two beautifully produced issues of each.

Possibly the most realistic alternative to the mainstream newsstand publishers came from Chicago-based First Comics. Despite their inauspicious start (**Warp**, 1983). First soon appeared to be the only new publisher with a credible structure. It was not set up by fans or distributors, and had a highly-professional appearance. While others glutted the market with hastily produced reprinted and 'second string' work, or missed more deadlines than they hit, First Comics slowly and carefully planned their launches on a longterm basis, preferring caution over trial and error.

In fact, First's excellent **American Flag** (Howard Chaykin, 1983) was the first title to rival the best of the mainstream companies in quality, awards and sales.

Though obviously aware of the experimental alternative being tried by small invariably poorly

financed new publishers, Marvel Comics seemed unwilling to commit money to any form of research and development. In fact, their first non-newsstand titles were ones which would otherwise have been cancelled. Instead of investing in this new area, Marvel took three titles, **Micronauts** (#38), **Ka-Zar** (#10) and **Moon Knight** (#15) all dated April 1982, added 25¢ to their cover price, and moved them over to direct distribution. Profits were thus ensured on each until late 1984 when orders fell too low to cover costs.

This of course was the true beauty of the direct-sale market. The increased newsstand space competition for comics publishers meant that retailers were unwilling to prominently display low cover price items, resulting in low sales. Yet massive printruns were required to ensure national retail distribution, whether retailers displayed them or not. Worse still, all comics were shipped on a sale-or-return basis. Simply put, if the retailer didn't sell them, they were (in theory) destroyed, no one really wanted the expense of returning unsolds. The publishers would receive affidavits, sworn statements, detailing quantities of unsold copies destroyed. But, adding further problems for comics publishers, these supposedly destroyed copies, with their purple-sprayed top or bottom edge would often reappear on the market at reduced price only months later, in direct competition with current full price issues, undercutting the publisher's sale yet further.

By the late 1970s, returns (or sworn affidavits) accounted for about 70% of the total print run. That's a lot of trees, and a lot of money to sell only 30%. This also explained the age-old mystery of why so many titles never made it past the fourth or sixth issue.

By the time the distributors could give a total sales figure, monthly comic book publishers would have already printed the fourth or even sixth issue. Disastrous sales on first issues would result in instant cancellation on further work, often leaving episodic plots in mid-air.

Suddenly, this direct-sale market meant supplying comics on a non-returnable basis to specialist retailers who knew how many copies to order (or quickly went out of business themselves). If advance orders were not,



COMICS INTERNATIONAL

high enough to bring in an acceptable profit, publishers could now cancel titles before printing, leaving only the cost of origination to write off or have the material repackaged in a more acceptable form.

But this new market also opened the doors for small new publishers to appear in a less risky, less expensive environment. But new publishers with no financial track record would have been a risky alternative, had it not been for the copyright situation.

While it had never been successfully challenged previously, it had been accepted since comic books' early days that publishers owned all reprint and licensing rights on material they published and paid for. Many even retained the artist's original artwork, under the argument that otherwise it could fall into pirate publishers' hands.

Then in 1978 new copyright laws were established for the protection of writers and artists "who were sole creators of a work". Those who had worked under supervision, or on part of a collective work or series, or as one of many contributors to a work were to be considered employees-for-hire. Marvel, for one, determined that all of their freelance creators fell under the latter category. Which makes sense. Were they to have believed (rightly or wrongly) that any were sole creators, all rights in such properties as *The Incredible Hulk*, *Spider-Man* et al would become the property of their creators.

Imagine the industry-wide implications of such laws. Creators of top-selling ideas such as *Batman*, *Superman*, *Captain America* and *Wonder Woman* would suddenly find that, now far too old to creatively compete, they owned all rights to properties of massive proportion.

In clarifying the situation, Marvel asked creators to sign a work-order agreement, "to insure our continued ownership of the material we produce and publish" as editor-in-chief Jim Shooter worded it in his letter of May, 1978.

The standard agreement covered all work created in the past or future, and stated that it had been specially ordered or commissioned for use as a contribution to a collective work, thus work made for



MELISSA STRETCHES OUT ON NIGHT GRASS, AND IT FEELS REAL BENEATH HER.

THE ORNATE TURRETS OF THE FANTASY CASTLE THRUST INTO THE MOON, AS IF WOUNDING THE PLANET.

BUT WE NEED A PLACE, MELISSA, WHERE YOU CAN CONTINUE YOUR DISCOURSE ON THESE RELEVANT TOPICS.



The one that started it all. The first Graphic Album, Don McGregor and Paul Gulacy's *Sabre*. Eclipse Comics, 1978

hire. One can only imagine that Warner Communications' *Superman* and *Batman* publishing subsidiary company, DC Comics, issued a similar agreement to protect their interests.

While the rights and wrongs of such agreements can be debated forever, the reality was that if creators did not sign, they would receive no further work.

The effect this had on the embryonic independent market's talent pool was inevitable. The fainthearted or security-seeking creators were happy to sign and accept a flat fee to produce as many pages as quickly as possible. But the more adventurous and often younger creators looked elsewhere.

The eager independents were only too happy to accommodate them with royalties, return of originals, fewer restrictions to the point of full creative control, and less deadline pressure.

One early example came from Eclipse Comics. Ex-Marvel writer Steve Gerber was in dispute over Marvel's licensing of his creation for them, *Howard the Duck*. To fund legal costs, he wrote a parody, *Destroyer Duck* (1982), with art donated by ex-Marvel stalwart Jack Kirby, and a back-up strip *Groo the Wanderer*, a Conan-esque numbskull by Sergio Aragones, of *Mad* marginals fame.

In an attempt to please both forms of creators without establishing a legal precedent, Marvel retained its work made for hire agreement on its original mainly newsstand imprint for established titles, and created a second imprint for new ideas. Creators not wanting to sell their ideas outright were given a single-rights showcase in Marvel's magazine size *Epic Illustrated*, under the talented and sympathetic editorship of Archie Goodwin.

Epic Illustrated had obviously been created to compete with *Heavy Metal*, a magazine launched in 1977 as a newsstand title which, with its high cover price, reached areas unattainable to standard comics.

Heavy Metal had in turn been inspired and licensed by *National Lampoon* publishers from France's *Metal Hurlant* (which literally translates as *Screaming Metal*).

France had undergone a creative rebellion similar to America in the early 1970s when Jean-Pierre

(Dionnet, 'Phillipe Druillet and Jean Giraud set up their own publishing company, Les Humanoides Associes. The comics writer and his two artist companions had previously been working primarily for TinTin publisher, Dargaud, with their album work being the company's mainstay. Dissatisfied with restrictions they launched their own magazine **Metal Hurlant**, to great critical success.

Life being full of ironies, Dionnet had been turned down by Marvel in 1976, when he offered them an American edition of **Metal Hurlant**. Though **National Lampoon's** publisher HM Communications took the offer, they later switched to reprinting Dargaud material in favour of **Metal Hurlant**.

But the success of Marvel's **Metal Hurlant**-inspired **Epic Magazine** was such that following its Spring 1980 launch, an entire line of first-rights Epic Comics was launched in 1982 with Jim Starlin's **Dreadstar**.

A relatively safe first title, **Dreadstar** continued the storyline established in **Epic Magazine's** **Metamorphosis** Odyssey series.

But suddenly the much-improved situation of single rights sales became a complication making both publishers and continuity conscious collectors' lives nightmarish. If a publisher eventually hit on a successful title, the creator could easily be wooed away by another publisher offering a higher royalty, or better advance, or a wider market to promote the title in. Comics publishing suddenly resembled the world of normal fiction, but with the difference that successful characters were on-going.

Collectors had to face both different formats and annoying delays as characters began to jump from one publisher to another.

Jim Starlin created a new storyline for **Epic Illustrated**, **Metamorphosis** Odyssey. Following a successful run as a 9-issue serial, it then reappeared as a graphic album from Eclipse (**The Price**, 1981) and a graphic novel from Marvel/Epic, **Dreadstar**. Issue 15 of **Epic Magazine** then followed on from both publishers' books with a black and white one-off strip. This in turn acted as a prologue to **Dreadstar**, the Epic Comics direct sale comic book. To reach



(c) Howard Chaykin, 1990

Before creating **American Flag** for First Comics, Howard Chaykin had several proto-type attempts, **Iron Wolf** (for DC 1973), **The Scorpion** (for Atlas Comics, 1975), **Monark Starstalker** (for Marvel, 1977) and **Dominic Fortune** (also for Marvel). Illustrated is Chaykin's **Cody Starbuck** (1974) produced for Mike Friedrich's direct sale **Star*Reach**.

a wider audience, the first six issues of this were reprinted less than three years later, as a 75¢ newsstand Epic monthly, **Dreadstar and Company**. Then, in 1985, both titles ceased (with issues 26 and 6 respectively), only to continue as an allnew First comic, continuing the original's numbering with issue 27.

Out of that convoluted continuity, newsstand buyers would only have found the first part (in **Epic Illustrated**) and the pre-First chunk in **Dreadstar and Company**.

There are countless other equally confusing examples that none of us would really want to detail. But the pressure was on.

Readers were being forced into shopping through direct sale specialists if only to keep track of changes and crossovers.

But perhaps the strangest of the many examples of 'musical publishers' occurred with Aragones' **Groo**. As stated earlier, it first saw life as a support act in Gerber and Kirby's anti-Marvel benefit book **Destroyer Duck**. Rapidly achieving its own title, the character jumped from Pacific to Eclipse again, finally to settle with Marvel itself, as a newsstand monthly published by Epic Comics.

In fact, while the dedication of the late Phil Seuling led to an alternative to newsstands, possibly saving the entire industry, the greatest benefactors of the radical changes made in the 1980s must surely be the only real players at the start of the decade, Marvel and DC Comics.

With their greater resources and vast libraries of reprintable material, they seem virtually unstoppable. Even creators who have worked for independent publishers invariably return to the security of the Big Two.

Somehow even those who bounce between the smaller and larger publishers invariably do their best work for the corporations. Looking back over a decade of creative freedom, a time when creators had the biggest inspiration to create world-beaters for their own direct profit, where are they? Have we seen the next Batman, Superman, Spider-Man or Hulk. We've seen the top creators rejuvenate all four. But where are their own creations?

Of course, there's always Eastman & Laird's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. ■

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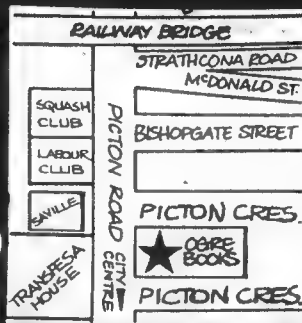
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2000AD

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fANTASY

media news

WHILE IT APPEARS to be a fact that the overlap between comic book fans and fantasy paperback readers is disappointingly small, comics fans do seem to follow the equally visual events of the fantasy film and tv screen with great interest.

So it was decided that Comics International would forego including a news

section on the non-illustrated word, but would keep you up to date on what to expect in future fantasy movies, television and video releases.

It is intended that this feature should expand over future issues, ultimately being able to provide a comprehensive monthly listing of all major media fantasy projects currently in production. ■

Adult Animation on US primetime

ONE OF THE comics trends of the late 1980s is now creeping into animation.

Adult-orientated animation has had several attempts to reach wide audiences in the past, thanks to Ralph Bakshi's theatrically released *Fritz the Cat* among others, but it has finally broken through on American television, courtesy of Rupert Maxwell's aspiring network, Fox TV.

The *Simpsons* is an adult animated spin-off from Fox's *Tracy Ullman Show*. It is now pulling in the company's highest ratings share to date (19) and ranks at 47 out of the 102 network shows.

It also has the distinction of being the first animated television series to be broadcast during prime time since

NBC's six-year run of *The Flintstones* ended in 1966.

For younger viewers, Fox is taking on Disney and Warners with an animated *Peter Pan* series which it intends to screen each weekday afternoon.

This ambitious project has yet to go into full production but is intended to run to a total of 65 half hour shows, and will be produced by Japanese animation house TMS Entertainment.

Walt Disney Productions are already embittered about Fox's moves and tactics, with accusations and lawsuits flying between the two.

Fox using TMS in Japan can only irritate matters, as this is the same studio Disney uses for most of its TV animation.

Opting out of options

REMEMBER LAST YEAR when it looked as though every available comic strip character was being snapped up for filming.

Endless lists of star names associated with great and some not so great strips were being boasted about by all the major production studios.

So, what happened? We've still only rumours about *Superman 5* and *Batman 2*, with established stars holding out for control. *The Punisher* died a death. *The Watchmen* didn't even

make it into production.

Just about the only one on the horizon is the star-studded *Dick Tracy*, with Warren Beatty, Madonna and Al Pacino.

We'll do so digging and see if we can publish a full update list next month. ■

New Tyne Tees children's SF

TYNE TEES Television in association with World Wide Television is producing a new seven part children's s-f series for transmission on ITV in May.

Kappatoo is written by Ben Steed and Jenny McDade and directed by Tony Kysh. ■



FRANK MILLER has finally finished his film script duties on director Irvin Kershner's *RoboCop 2*, so his long-overdue return to comics work is imminent.

Miller had been fortunate to be involved in the project far beyond the normal screen-writer's role. While most film scribes dread seeing the re-writes done when their ideas finally make the screen, Miller had been allowed to make his own changes all the way through to the 'pink page' on set amendments and being present in the editing rooms.

In the past comics creators such as *Marshal Law's* Kevin O'Neill have rejected film work upon the realisation that the amount of control and direct input they have in comics is far greater than that of movies.

The film features the return of both stars from the original movie as Peter Weller dons his *RoboCop* armour once more, and Nancy Allen resumes her role as lady cop Lewis.

Miller had expected to spend no more than six months on the film, but wrapped up after almost two years. ■

BSB screens Howard & Spirit TV premieres

NOW IS THE TIME to quack up in front of the box! It's duck season on the tube.

Fledgling satellite television company BSB will be running the British television premiere of George Lucas's *Howard the Duck* on their movie channel.

The celluloid version of Marvel's frantic fowl was dubbed a proper turkey when initially released and was retitled *Howard*, a new breed of hero for British audiences. It subsequently found a following through video rental outlets.

A better production than generally given credit for, *Howard the Duck's* major fault lies in being filmed like *The Cosby Show*. The harsher edges of Howard's humour seem out of place in a fun-for-all-the-family style movie.

If you don't have access to the extra-terrestrial station, *Howard* is now available on sell-through as a £9.99 video.

If you do have access to BSB and *Howard* hasn't quenched your thirst for ducks, you should also check out *Daffy Duck's Movie: Fantastic Island*.

Also premiering this month on BSB's movie channel is *Masters of the Universe*,



Bugs Bunny Superstar and an inconspicuous feature, *The Spirit*.

BSB were unable to confirm that this was indeed the celluloid version of Will Eisner's classic crime fighter, but their description of "an action-adventure film" seems to fit the bill. (SR)

New UK-US production for Kingsley Amis story

NOT TO BE confused with Henry Treece's classic historical fantasy novel of the same name, Kingsley Amis's *The Green Man* is a ghost story which BBC-TV is currently co-producing with US cable network Arts & Entertainment.

As BBC Enterprises also

have a hand in the production, it can be safely assumed that they will be marketing it on video some time soon after transmission.

The series which should pop up on the Autumn schedules, has been adapted by Malcolm Bradbury and stars Albert Finney. ■

Fantasy box office greats of all time

Try a little experiment out. If you don't read any further, you can test this on yourself. If you're a compulsive page scanner who has already glanced below, you'll have to try it on a friend:

How many fantasy films have made it into the all-time top ten box office hits?

Four? Five? Six? Not even close. How about **nine**? That's right — if you include the idea of an enormous shark called *Jaws* being fantasy. But even without Spielberg's fishy fable *Beverly Hills Cop* is the only undisputed non-fantasy film to sneak in.

The following chart, courtesy of *Variety*, gives cinema takes in Canada and the US only, but as a rule films which do well in North America expect to earn about the same again in overseas rentals.

1	<i>ET - The Extra-Terrestrial</i> (1982)	\$228,379,346
2	<i>Star Wars</i> (1977)	\$193,500,000
3	<i>Return of the Jedi</i> (1983)	\$168,002,414
4	<i>The Empire Strikes Back</i> (1980)	\$141,600,000
5	<i>Jaws</i> (1975)	\$129,549,242
6	<i>Ghostbusters</i> (1984)	\$128,264,005
7	<i>Raiders of the Lost Ark</i> (1981)	\$115,598,000
8	<i>Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom</i> (1984)	\$109,000,000
9	<i>Beverly Hills Cop</i> (1984)	\$108,000,000
10	<i>Back to the Future</i> (1985)	\$104,237,346

The sad reality is that every single one is America-made, the highest British production being *Superman* (1978) at \$82,800,000.

Naturally enough, all the top earners were made within the last fifteen years, with the inflated box office ticket prices. This results in the most widely seen movie of all time *Gone With the Wind* (1939) being pushed down to position 22 with a mere \$77,612,077 to its credit.

The 1989 totals are now eagerly awaited. The year that *Batman* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* smashed all box office successes could well result in pushing the ninth and tenth entries out, leaving a perfect ten for fantasy films.

Finally, if you seriously doubted for a second the viability of a certain Mr Steven Spielberg, take another glance at the chart and see how many of the films he had a hand in.

As for George Lucas, is there any wonder he's going back to make more chapters of his *Star Wars* nine-parter. ■

More Impossible Missions

ABC TELEVISION has improved its position in the US ratings war with an unlikely candidate; a remake of the double Emmy-award winning Bruce Geller cult series *Mission Impossible*.

As the original 7-year

series, starring Martin Landau, Peter Graves, Barbara Bain and Leonard Nimoy, enjoyed such a high rating when rescreened as part of recent Def II programming, it is hoped the new show will soon be picked up. ■

Nostalgia quota

WHILE DEF II has been doing its bit for fantasy nostalgia, screening cult Sixties series such as *Buck Rogers*, *The Invisible Man*, *Mission: Impossible* and *The Invaders*. Channel 4 hasn't been far behind with its nicely timed Sunday afternoon screenings of *Get Smart*, *Lost in Space* and *Land of the Giants*.

But don't go thinking they're doing it just for you. Both minority networks have been pulling in incredible audience figures with their nostalgia trips.

Land of the Giants has been Channel 4's second most popular show recently, nestled inbetween the Wednesday and the Monday helpings of *Brookside* with an estimated 4.9 million viewers

BBC 2's *Quantum Leap* has just beaten *The Invaders* re-runs, with 3.4 million as opposed to 3.3, in positions 7 and 8 respectively.

Invisible Man and *Monty Python* repeats had hovered around the 4 million mark when aired late 1989 and

early 1990, sitting securely in BBC 2's top ten shows, and *Lost in Space* had proved a firm Channel 4 favourite, with its with its 3 million



viewers pushing it into the lower half of the top ten while trendy first-run **thirty-something** has had difficulty reaching 2 million. ■

National TV fantasy ratings

THOUGH FANTASY reruns have proved popular for the minority channels, when the broader picture is examined, the all-channel top 100, none get a look in.

Ranging from 20 million top (*Coronation Street*) to 4.6 million 100th (*Family Matters*), only two genre series make an appearance.

Real Ghostbusters and *Count Duckula* with their 4.6 to 4.8 million viewers hover in the low 90s.

Even when all-time top money making fantasy films receive TV showings, they have difficulty fighting the soaps and sitcoms.



Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom screened over Christmas failed to beat *Blind Date* with 13.7 million. *Teenwolf* screened the following week pulled in a million less viewers than *This is Your Life*.

Very depressing stuff! ■

News compiled
by Dez Skinn



The chart below is based on the number of titles being imported from America for sale in the UK April, 1990.

Hardback & paperback editions of same work are treated as one, and only new work or new format editions are included.

Cover Price totals: April 1990

The adjacent chart looks at the total cost to the consumer to buy one copy of each title shipped by US publishers for April, 1990 UK sale.

Where hardback and paperback editions are simultaneously published, the cheaper edition is included.

Bracketed figure show the average price of a title across the publisher's range for the month.

1	Marvel	£89.10 (£1.27)
2	DC Comics	£73.95 (£1.30)
3	Eternity	£69.15 (£3.64)
4	Fantagraphics	£64.60 (£4.61)
5	Eclipse	£44.65 (£8.93)
6	Pioneer	£21.85 (£7.28)
7	Aircel	£19.35 (£3.87)
8	Viz Comics	£17.60 (£3.52)
9	Archie	£17.50 (£0.87)
10	Epic/Marvel	£16.35 (£1.63)
11=	Caliber	£13.50 (1.50)
	New	£13.50 (£6.75)
13	Disney	£11.95 (£1.33)
14	First	£11.85 (£1.48)
15	Innovation	£11.75 (£1.47)
16	Kitchen Sink	£11.10 (£2.22)
17	Now	£10.80 (£1.20)
18	Valiant	£8.90 (£2.97)
19	Dark Horse	£8.00 (£1.33)
20=	Adventure	£7.80 (£2.60)
	Mirage	£7.80 (£2.60)
	Others	£120.80 (£1.67)
	TOTAL APRIL	£671.65 (£1.95)

Market Share: Titles

1	Marvel	70 titles (20.3%)
2	DC Comics	57 titles (16.6%)
3	Archie Comics	20 (5.8%)
4	Eternity	18 (5.2%)
5	Fantagraphics	14 (4.1%)
6	Epic/Marvel	10 (2.9%)
7=	Caliber	9 (2.6%)
	Disney	9 (2.6%)
	Harvey	9 (2.6%)
	Now	9 (2.6%)
11=	First Comics	8 (2.3%)
	Innovation	8 (2.3%)
13	Quality/Fleetway	7 (2.0%)
14	Dark Horse	6 (1.7%)
15=	Aircel	5 (1.5%)
	Eclipse	5 (1.5%)
	Jademan	5 (1.5%)
	Kitchen Sink	5 (1.5%)
	Viz Comics	5 (1.5%)
	Others	63 (18.3%)
	TOTAL APRIL TITLES	343

CHARTS ANALYSIS: APRIL 1990

Eclipsed

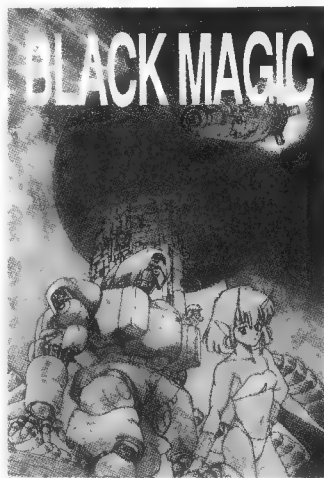
YESTERYEAR'S biggest indie competition to DC and Marvel was in the shape of Chicago's First Comics, and California's Eclipse Comics.

But both have been overtaken in title output by many of the newer companies.

While First Comics have always remained steady in their level of output, possibly achieving a high title sale as we will see next month, Eclipse had always gone the route of building up a high quantity of titles, both on-going and mini-series.

But now the one-time publishers of around 20 originated colour comics a month have dropped from their previous large output to no US (or UK) originated material whatsoever on their April schedules.

Surrounded by reprints and re-solicitations for eight prestige format editions and graphic albums, Eclipse are offering only five new titles for April, the company taking top position on price



with an average of £8.93. The five include three books, **Miracleman** Book 2 in hardcover at £23.00, **Pogo & Albert** 3 at £5.95 and **In Fact** Volume 1 at £12.95.

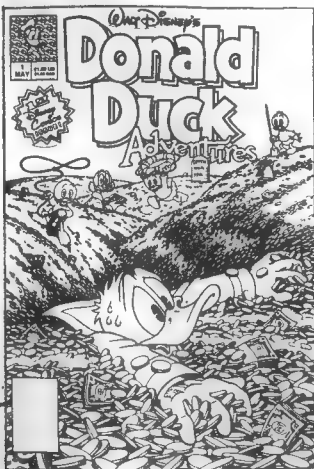
Their only comics titles for the entire month are both black and white Japanese translations, **Cyber 7** Book 2 issue 7 and **Black Magic** issue 2, both priced at \$2.00 US (around £1.20 UK).

Let's hope this month is an exception for Eclipse, a pioneering publisher which seems to have virtually abandoned the colour comic origination market.

All three humour publishers in top ten

IT IS INTERESTING to observe that while both DC and Marvel move towards humour as the next possible trend in comics (most apparent in DC's **Justice League** titles and Marvel's **Excelsior** and **She-Hulk**), the three humour giants of yesteryear, Archie, Harvey and Disney (then published by Dell/Gold Key) all feature in the top ten

Resisting the expensive formats, all three offer good publisher value per title, with Disney (finally under its own imprint) at £1.33 per title average cost, while Archie average out at 87p, and Harvey (this month placed at position 23) come in with an incredibly low 80p a copy average.



Marvel's 4% lead

WHILE MARVEL continue to dominate the market, both in titles per month and total cover prices, it is interesting to observe that DC Comics continue to challenge the leader, with only a 4% gap between them.

Given Marvel's overall leaning towards the youth end of the market, with their titles echoing their 1960s prime, DC's more

adventurous range and packaging may show a greater strength in the specialist market in volume sales.

Next issue should reveal all as we will be completing the picture by showing a percentage sale difference on the direct market distribution, with both individual title and combined publisher volume percentage charts.

Shooter: Not so valiant

Ex-editor in chief of Marvel Comics Jim Shooter makes his first appearance this month, with his new Valiant Comics label.

Having secured comics rights to Nintendo home video games, his somewhat unusual launch month has his three titles scraping into the price chart at number 18.

Super Mario Bros 1 (\$1.95) is a 32 page full colour comic based on the new Super Mario Bros 3 game.

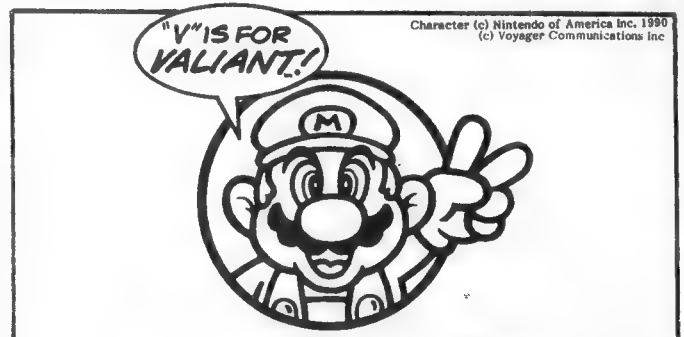
The same month he launches **Super Mario Bros Special Edition 1**, also at \$1.95.

Both riding the back of

the \$30m video game advertising campaign, and with apparently interchangeable content, it seems unlikely that their main market would be comics shops.

Valiant's third April title is the \$9.95 **Nintendo Comics System 1**. A quarterly anthology album, it features seven stories based on Nintendo game characters

With publishing rights to Gold Key's 1960s line-up (**Space Family Robinson**, **Magnus**, etc) this all-Nintendo launch can only be viewed as a disappointment to comic fans with fond memories of Shooter's **Legion** work.



In conclusion

WHILE THIS is the first appearance of our charts, the combined totals are staggering. Even ignoring the ever-increasing number of UK comics and graphic novels (more on those next month), American alone has 67 comics publishers producing 411 titles, including reprints, all of which are on offer to UK retailers and customers.

Long long gone are the days when it was possible

to keep a complete collection of all the American comics distributed in the UK by regular visits to your second hand bookshop or market stall.

One of our chief objectives on **Comics International** is to help both your retailer and you keep abreast of the entire English-language comics publishing world.

It has reached the stage where someone had to provide a map!



REVIEWS SECTION

It is the intention of *Comics International* help you, the comic reader, keep abreast of the entire range of titles currently available through direct sale specialist shops and mail order companies. While few retailers would allow you to read all the titles in stock before choosing your purchases, our reviews intend to point titles out to you that you might otherwise have ignored. Naturally, this section should be of even greater benefit to readers having to rely on mail order, as they only discover the quality of a new title after purchase!

Review codes: Titles general competitive performance 1 to 10. Specific issue's quality against previous issues: --- to +++

In fairness and to be thorough, we use two ratings. The number following each review (on a scale of 0 - 10) is a quality comparison with other **similar** titles currently being published. We make no attempt to compare *Love & Rockets* to *Batman*, but treat each within the context of its own genre.

The individual issue is also rated within the confines of its previous issues. Hence a comparatively dull title may get a low number, but a high rating for the specific issue reviewed (ranging from --- through to +++) if it has suddenly improved and is worth a look.

Reviewing panel: Simon Rogers, Mark Hazeldene, Dez Skinn

PUBLISHERS: If your titles are missing, to rectify this in future issues be sure to include us on your mailing list (air).

MARVEL COMICS

Alpha Flight 83 <+> The Canadian super-team is experiencing a period of restoration as their adventures undergo a surreal amalgamation with Amerindian legends (Hudneall & Sherman) 6

Amazing Spider-Man 331 <+> This Spidey-Punisher team up gains a controversial edge from a plot to replace the gold standard with a drug standard. (Michelinie & Larsen/Machlan) 9

Avengers 316 <+> Fast paced action with some well realised space sequences (Byrne & Ryan/Palmer) 7

Avengers Spotlight 31 <+> Socially motivated action with Hawkeye and USAgent. (Various) 5

Avengers West Coast 57 <+++> Wanda goes totally off her rocker, but Magneto is granted a merciful magnanimity that hasn't been seen in a long time. (Byrne & Ryan) 8

Captain America 369 <+> Standard Marvel action. The title has yet to regain the momentum it had during the "Captain" saga. (Gruenwald & Lim/Bulanadi) 5

Conan the Barbriar 231 <-> Entertaining swashbuckling concludes the Cimmerian's adventures before the title's much-needed revamp into 'Young Conan'. (Conway & Springer/Perlin) 5

Daredevil 279 <+++> Compulsive tense drama with an even darker knight (Nocenti & Romita Jr/Williamson) 8

Doctor Strange 15 <+++> Currently enjoying a renaissance, the Sorcerer Supreme displays a droll sense of humour while dealing with his vampire brother and the Voodoo Queen of New Orleans (Roy & Dann Thomas + Guice) 8

Excaliber 21 <- -> Strangled by its own convolutions, the British mutant title fails to realise the potential it promised. Desperately in need of a consistent vision. (Claremont & Wozniak/Milgrom) 3

Fantastic Four 339 <+++> Marvel's flagship title is definitely back on form. Three issues into the roller-coaster end of the world scenario and it still feels like the adventure has only just begun. (W Simonson) 10

Incredible Hulk 368 <+> Understated satire of the Hulk concept continues to carry this book in new directions. (David & Keith/Jones) 7

Inhumans Special 1 Fun for the continuity buffs who will no doubt spot a glaring error in the framing sequence that surrounds this tale of Black Bolt's family before they met the Fantastic Four. (Mougin & Howell/Colletta) 4

Marvel Comics Presents 47 <-> Passable tales from the Marvel Universe. Wolverine leads with standard fare. (Various) 4

Marvel Comics Presents 48 <+> Writer/artist Eric Larsen gets some nice gags into his Wolverine-Spiderman

team-up. Otherwise lacklustre issue (Various) 5

Namor, the Sub-Mariner 1 John Byrne turns his attention to one of Marvel's great legends with an inspired but ultimately unexciting tale. (Byrne & Wiacek) 3

New Mutants 88 <+> Usual frantic hi-jinks with the mutant teen team. (Louise Simonson & Liefeld/Barta) 5

Nth Man 11 <+> Fast-paced action, but if you're not a regular reader it takes a while to pick up the plot. (Hama & Wagner/Fredricks) 5

Punisher 32 <+> Environmental twists and a hell's angel disguise lend something to this vigilante vignette. (Baron & Reinhold/Farmer) 5

Quasar 10 <+> Light-hearted use of heavy-hearted concepts make this a continually entertaining series. (Gruewald & Manley/Bulanadi) 6

RoboCop 2 <+> Pseudo-Dredd frolics from author of same. (Grant & Sullivan/DeMulder) 5

Saga of the Original Human Torch 1 (of 4) Fiery reworking of the flaming android's '40s beginnings. (Thomas & Buckler/Bulanadi) 8

She-Hulk 14 <+> Howard the Duck makes a long-overdue return in Marvel's laugha-minute title. (Gerber & Hitch/Sanders III) 8

Silver Surfer 36 <+> Cosmic guffaws with the Impossible Man bring humour to an otherwise grim retrospective. Essential reading if you want to follow future issues. (Starlin & Lim/Christopher) 6

Steeltown Rockers 1 (of 6) Brave attempt to get away from superheroes for a while. This tale of a wannabe-rockstar is touching and funny. (Lee & Leialoha) 8

What The..?! 7 <+> Hit and miss spoof from madcap Marble. The send up ads are the hits (Various) 5

Wolverine 23 <+++> The clawed crusader has regained some of his old appeal with a tale of revolutionary drug-busters which reaches a satisfying conclusion this issue (Goodwin & Byrne) 7

X-Men 260 <-> Tense drama with Dazzler being hunted. A trifle sadistic at points, but otherwise swamped by the X-Men's convoluted history. (Claremont & Silvestri/Green) 5

EPIC COMICS

Akira 17 <+++> Frantic science fiction with a gripping sense of impending disaster that never lets up, like a perpetual roller coaster (Otomo) 10

Groo the Wanderer <+> It's a laugh! Buy it! (Aragones

avec Evanier) 8

Inter-Face 3 (of 4) <+++> Engaging sequel to the *Espers* series published by Eclipse. Some of the best painted artwork around gives this psychic thriller an extra boost. (Hudnell & Johnson) 9

Nightbreed 1 (of 4) This adaptation of Clive Barker's latest movie has you wondering who the real monsters are! Great stuff. (Grant/Wagner & Baikie) 10

Stalkers 1 Shoot 'em up satire that comes across like *RoboCop* without the *Robo*. (Strnad/Verheiden & Texiera) 6

DC COMICS

Adventures of Superman 465 <+++> The Man of Steel's new costume makes an impressive change. One of the best mainstream comics around. (Jurgens/Thibert) 8

Animal Man 22 <+++> A mystery is solved, but it will make you cry. (Morrison & Cullins/Montano) 10

Atlantis Chronicles 1 (of 7) Fine and fantastic pseudo-history of the legendary sunken city(ies) (David & Maroto) 7

Blackhawk 12 <+> Loose ends are tied up prior to new direction. (Moench & Artis/Burchett) 5

Captain Atom 39 <+> Basic superhero action (Bates/Weisman & Kayana/Tanghal) 5

Doom Patrol 31 <+++> Strangely reminiscent of bygone *Swamp Thing* tales, the DP get their own John Constantine figure. It still sweeps you along on a seemingly endless wave of ideas. (Morrison & Case/Nyberg) 10

Hellblazer 28 <+> Picks up dangling plot thread interrupted three issues ago when only first episode was told. Spooky, but very much a prologue for next issue. (Delano & Tiner/Walker) 5

Legends of the Dark Knight 5 <+++> Shaman concludes with style, panache and Bruce Wayne committed to his fate as the Gotham guardian. (O'Neill & Hannigan/Beatty) 10

The Question 35 <+++> The faceless hero's penultimate issue builds towards an explosive climax. The thinking man's vigilante. (O'Neill & Cowan/Jones III) 10

Star Trek: The Next Generation 6 <-> Impoverished tale and hurried art fail to capture the spirit of the television series. (Jan Friedman & Marcos) 2

PIRANHA PRESS

Beautiful Stories for Ugly Children 9 <+> Funny but melancholy, this all-special lemming issue leaves you with a deep sense of futility. Don't read it on top of a cliff. (Loapre & Sweetman) 5

INDEPENDENTS

Lone Wolf & Cub 31 (First Comics) <+> Attention to the etiquette of feudal Japan raises **Lone Wolf** above most of the cut-and-thrust epics (Koike & Kojima) 8

E-Man 2 (Comico) <+> Second part of a 3-issue mini-series with E-Man looking for the planet that gave him birth. In true form he gets lost and finds himself on a planet where knights are bold . . . but very stupid.

A great all round comic that has reunited the original creators of E-Man and shouldn't be ingored. (Cuti & Staton) 7

Cheval Noir 4 (Dark Horse) <+> A gorgeous John Bolton cover depicting a vampire looking up from its victim is actually the best part of this disappointing anthology. Apart from a reprinted (and retouched) Bolton strip, the other critically acclaimed material looks rather dated. 5

Tales Too Terrible To Tell (NEC Press). This 76 page reprint of 1950s stories

Two contrasting points of view on this issue's star choice.

MIRACLEMAN 16. Any title that can retain a heightened sense of expectation when it only appears about once a year has got to have something — and this one's got everything.

Despite the protracted publication schedule, **Miracleman** remains a jewel in Alan Moore's crown.

His final episode, where the crew-cut superman takes over the world, does in 36 pages what most titles would do in 36 issues.

All major ills are cured by **Miracleman** and his cohorts, and it's an uplifting experience to follow their restructuring of a world in decay. But Moore still manages to leave our hero doubting that he has made the right decisions.

John Tottleben provides some of the most engagingly elaborate artwork to grace recent comics and his cover can only be described as beautiful.

Neil Gaiman and Mark Buckingham take up the tale from next issue. They've got a tough act to follow but, if they can maintain the new bi-monthly schedule, **Miracleman** could well be the comic of 1990. (SR)

While, on the other hand . . .

Miracleman 16 <+> Over a year in the making, and was it worth the wait? A great resounding 'don't know'. It is good, there's no denying, and the artwork is astounding. But it seems a letdown after the last issue.

Miracleman and **Miraclegirl** create utopia on Earth, and even get Charles Manson to become a samaritan. As for **Miracledog**, you're in for a real surprise.

But after all the build up, I don't know. (MH) 7

took a year to make it to the shops, but is the best value for money (around £1.85) you can find. It contains eight pre-code horror strips, reprinted from **Worlds of Fear**, **Mister Mystery** and such, together with a four page **Tick** story.

Lots of other goodies as well, and an EC homage cover that alone warrants

the price. (Various) 10

Sapphire 1 (Aircel) An adults-only package, still on the money-spinning **Black Kiss** bandwagon, Aircel Comics have released yet another dog.

The 'adults only' cover blurb is the only true humour present, as even a seven year old would find the content purile.

If you have any taste whatsoever, hold your nose and walk on by! 0

Varcel's Vixens 1 (Caliber Press). Written and drawn by Susn van Camp, this was originally intended to be a graphic novel, but is now being presented as a three part mini-series.

Varcel, last seen in **Tales of the Aniverse**, has recruited three other anthropomorphic mercenaries. The quest is underway for something called a Polyod.

An entertaining science fiction comic if you can handle the American craze for funny animals. 5

Mister X v2, number 7 (Vortex) <+> The first of a two-issue story entitled **Limbo Boxcars**. It's an odd storyline, involving Mr X going to Heaven and conversing with God. Or does he? Minimalistic and surreal, this is far better than the last six-issue snoozer. (Morgan & D'Israeli) 6

The Tick 7 (NEC Press)

<+> This has to be one of the best independent titles on the market right now. Read **The Tick** and bust a gut with laughter. Uncluttered art and great humour makes it about time you ran down to your nearest comics dealer, shouting the Tick's fearsome battlecry, 'SPOON!'. (Ben Edlund) 10

Mighty Tiny 1 (Antarctic

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Press) <+> A charming title from the creator of *Ninja High School*, this is the first part of a five issue mini-series. Tiny is the surname of a family of rodents, with each issue focusing on a different generation. The nice artwork makes this something worth trying out. (Ben Dunn) 7

Apache Dick 2 (Eternity) <+> "The Dick and the Doll" is more bawdy humour in an under-rated book. This issue has an amusing tale involving Apache Dick getting married to a scheming go-getter who murdered all her earlier husbands to get their cash.

This mini-series contains characters from the brilliant *Trouble With Girls*. (Jacobs & Robertson) 8
Jack the Ripper 3 (Eternity) <+> The final part of a 3-issue mini-series. Now the truth can be told! The Ripper murders were all part of a Masonic scheme that wanted a secret to be kept secret.

The art is the only passable feature of this title. Lots more interesting things to spend your £1.50 on. (Bruce Balfour & Chris Jones) 3

Usagi Yojimbo 21 (Fantagraphics) <+> The saga continues. Usagi gets roped in to protect a village from a clan of ninjas called The Bat Clan. Nice clean art and good parody of the *Lone Wolf and Cub* comics. (Stan Sakai) 7

The Fauna Rebellion 1 (Fantagraphics) An absolute joy to read, the first part of a 3-issue mini-series.

A group of bears rebel against the human race and form F.A.U.N.A. (Free Animal Underground Network Army). On their travels they recruit a squirrel and Junior Jackalope (a half rabbit, half antelope creature). Both the art and script are excellent. Highly recommended (Crabb) 9

Rex Miller's Chaingang (Northstar) Based on the Rex Miller novel *Slob*, Peter Gross's detailed art leaps out of the page and leads you into reading the story.

A brutal murderer named Chaingang who lives in the sewers kidnaps a police inspector. With all the authorities after him, there promises to be more mindless violence in future issues.

Should prove as popular as Northstar's *Faust*, and with Tim Vigil taking on art in issue two, that should pull in extra readers. (P. Gross) 8

The Adventures of Luther Arkwright 1 (Dark Horse).

If you live in the UK and haven't seen Bryan Talbot's Arkwright in any of its four (five?) previous versions, get this one. It's a complex and intriguing story involving time parallels and Oliver Cromwell. While it's very complicated at first, stick with it. The reward is that it all comes together like a jigsaw puzzle to reveal the full picture.

The art is absolutely wonderful. Certainly the best of British. (Bryan Talbot) **Cerebus 129** (Aardvark-Vanaheim) <+> The penultimate chapter of The Poet series in Jaka's story.

A bit subdued, but surely when read in its entirety it will be the usual brilliance of graphic literature that one now expects of creator Dave Sim. (Sim & Gerhard) 8
Mangle Tangle Tales (Innovation). Good artwork and quickfire humour make this a pleasant surprise. Includes the obligatory Harlan Ellison introduction (Alan Moore was out), but the stories are great, including 'Weird Atomic Broccoli' and 'Walrussticities'. (Various creators) 7

BRITISH

Atomic Comics 2 - Sam Bronx and the Robots (Acme)

Serge Clerc's Euro-SF parody is a fun affair. The electronic tomfoolery owes more to the Three Stooges than Isaac Asimov and the hard covers encourage the feeling that you've got something special.

A real prestige format and great value. 8

Deadline 16 <+> The nice thing about Steve Dillon and Brett Ewin's style-bible anthology is that no matter how many times you put an issue down, there's always something you haven't noticed when you pick it back up again.

Hugo Tate is emerging as an everyman for the nineties, the elemental fury of Tank Girl is devastatingly funny, and *Wired* World continues to amuse.

And that really is just scratching the surface. 10

Doctor Who Magazine 159 (Marvel UK) <+> Marvel seem unsure of which direction to take their Time Lord title. This may be a reflection of the BBC's indifference to the long-running series, but the features are strained while the comic strip misses the manipulating dominance of Sylvester McCoy's Doctor.

This issue is curious in that the strip features the fourth Doctor's companion

STRIP SEARCH



LONDONERS GOT a taste of the diversity of comic art at an imaginative exhibition last month. *Strip Search* collected some of the world's best comics productions under one roof.

The exhibition at Camden's Swiss Cottage Library followed the history of comics from the days of Windsor McCay's *Little Nemo* to modern features such as *Deadline's* Tank Girl.

Some 130 pieces of artwork carried this kaleidoscopic history from one end of the century to the other.

Organised by *Escape Magazine* editor Paul Gravett and Camden Visual Arts officer Paul Colette, this experience in sensory-overload attracted considerable visitors between February 10 and March 17.

During its course, *Strip Search* launched four titles upon the world: *Hard-Boiled Defective Stories* by Charles Burn, *The Crisis/Amnesty special*, *Al Book Three*, and *Troubled Souls* by Garth Ennis and John McCrea.

The exhibition concluded with a discussion on the future of comics.

Still unconfirmed, *Strip Search* is hoped to resume at Bracknell Art Centre, Berkshire, in June, before travelling further round the country.

Book's comic fare

THE BOOK TRADE held its own *Strip Search* last month. Bookshop owners and distributors attending the Book Fair, Olympia, London, gathered at the first trade seminar on the graphic novel on March 26.

Following a slide show presented by *Escape* editor Paul Gravett, retailers heard the views of a panel which included Titan marketing director Lis Gay, Fleetway publicity officer Igor Goldkind, Penguin commissioning editor Ravi Mirchandani, ABS Distribution director John Masters and Pentos Books director David Grieves.

Sarah-Jane Smith. (Donkin/Brand & Ridgway) 6

The Complete Gerry Anderson Episode Guide (Titan). Priced at £8.99, the slip-shod research means that this record of the puppet master's work begs more questions than it answers. Spartan first transmission dates are given for the London area, ignoring that some shows premiered in the Midlands up to a full year earlier. (Compiled by Adam Pirani) 3

The Spiral Cage (Titan) This uplifting autobiography, price £5.95, shows that every cloud really can have a silver lining.

Writer and artist Al Davison was born with severe spina bifida, and *The Spiral Cage* is a witty rebuff to anyone who feels the crippling condition prevents him from interacting with the rest

of society.

The triumph of Al Davison's life is that he has continually defied all expectations of his future. Nobody told him he couldn't walk, so he started walking.

His childhood reminiscences carry a natural humour which relieves the apparent grimness of his situation and allows the reader to struggle with him as he comes to terms with the world. A book that deserves to be noticed. 10

Hard-Boiled Defective Stories (Penguin Books) They've been called sick. They've been called weird. The chain-smoking private eye looks like Big Daddy and he clashes with an assortment of robots, cultists and genetic experiments in five pulp-pastiche tales. However you want to describe them, they're pretty funny. (Charles Burns) 10

LETTERS

COMICS INTERNATIONAL's letters column is your forum for opinion on publications, writers, artists, prices, trends, anything and everything connected with the industry. As such, opinions are not necessarily those of the publisher. Letters for publication will only be edited as a grammatical or space consideration. Write to us at:

COMICS INTERNATIONAL LETTERS, 77 OXFORD ST, LONDON W1

This issue's comments are in response to a pre-publication questionnaire.

BULLPEN BULLSH*T

Mike Anderson, Hitchin, Herts.

Why do Marvel Comics insist on continuing to print such utter rubbish on their Bullpen Bulletins pages month after month? When the then-editor-in-chief Jim Shooter started the Pro-Files biographies of major contributors, they made interesting reading. Somewhat limited, with creators having to answer pre-set (and often twee) questions, but at least it gave us some insight into the people behind Marvel Comics. Now, with Shooter gone, Marvel still insist on continuing his idea — at least I assume it was his idea, as he featured himself first.

We've now reached the stage where the assistant editor's copy boy is elevated to star status by having his mini-biog appear in the full month's range of product Marvel puts out. By my reckoning that's something like 2½ million comics a month telling us that some unknown isn't "as mean as he looks". Who cares?

If Marvel insist on continuing this "time honoured tradition" until everyone including the lift operator has been featured, can they at least insist on sensible answers? The humorous replies to 'pet peeve' et al just ain't funny no more (if they ever were).

WHAT PRICE PROFESSIONALISM?

An Open Letter to DC Comics

I own a small comics shop in the UK, and prefer to remain anonymous to avoid any backlash. But I hope this letter sees print as I wish to question DC's moral ethics in connection with the publication of *Arkham Asylum*.

With the backing of DC's full in-house publicity across all of their titles for several months, assisted by point-of-sale items, we were told that *Arkham Asylum* was the big event. It seemed to be another step forward from a major comics company which had been responsible for many previous breakthroughs, such as the first mini-series (*Camelot 3000*), and the introduction of new formats such as this, the *Arkham Asylum* hardback.

While I appreciate that the delay in publication (which increased the anticipation better than any pre-planned marketing could have) was down to DC's parent, Warners, not wanting to 'deviate' from the movie characters' roles, there is no denying that this book could have been produced cheaper. But we were told it would be hardback only for a full year.

Retailers ordered big, sinking as much as possible into a supposed long-term investment. After all, we had a full year to sell our stocks.

So what happened to the honesty of DC? When customers asked about the book, we told them it was hardback only, so our customers believed us. We suffered lower sales on other titles (non-returnable ones, so the publishers didn't suffer at all), and people bought the hardback out of their comics budget in favour of regular titles. Some had to drop as many as 20 comics to buy the book.

Now that it's done so well, DC tell us the much cheaper softback edition is coming out. SIX MONTHS AFTER THE HARDBACK.

So what do we tell our customers, DC? Do we say we conned them, or you conned them? The majority of my customers only bought the hardback because they didn't want to wait a full year. Six months would have made a difference. They're angry, I'm angry and you've blown your credibility, DC.

I wonder if you told Titan Books they had a year to sell their hardback edition too.

If somebody at DC reads this, I hope you'll have the good manners to reply in a future issue. You owe your success to retailers and readers, let's have a little respect shown... in print.

ARKHAM ATTACK 2

Andrew Harvey, Leytonstone, London E11

Not even Dave McKean's inspired paintings can save *Arkham Asylum* from being an out-and-out ripoff. Marvellous as they are, they are ultimately too similar to one another and their impact is dulled as the individual pages eventually merge and blend into a murky impenetrable morass of gloom and darkness. As such, they perfectly complement Grant Morrison's plodding, skeletal storyline. Judging by this, Morrison has forgotten how to write.

There is hardly a plot, more like a boring and dismal anecdote, and there are no contrasts whatsoever. *Arkham* is an unrelenting downer that leaves the reader begging for relief.

It is also heavyhanded, dull, pretentious, shallow, disjointed, often incomprehensible, largely inaccessible and sorely lacking in humour.

The story, as it were, chronicles Batman's journey through the corridors of *Arkham*. No doubt this is meant to parallel a similar journey through the labyrinth of Batman's own dark soul, but Morrison is no Joseph Conrad.

There are virtually no new

COMICS INTERNATIONAL

insights into Batman's character, and, as often as not, the reader is left wondering just what's going on, particularly as to why Batman is doing whatever it is that he's doing. And who are all these people anyway? Long-time Bat-fans should recognise all the baddies, but how about some clues and background for all the new readers out there? £15.95 is an awful lot to pay for some pompous and smarmy in-jokes.

Being vague and ambiguous just for the sake of it is no great accomplishment, providing illumination and understanding of character and motivation is.

The only humour and relief is provided by a gloriously maniacal Joker, but, typically, his every appearance is marred by literally painful, unreadable dialogue. Apparently this is intentional, a printing gimmick made to unsettle and disorient us, but it's really just stupid, eye-straining and annoying.

More successful is the story within a story, the story of *Arkham Asylum* itself as revealed through the diaries of its founder, Amadeus Arkham. This is a genuinely creepy tale of madness, murder and revenge. It's only *Arkham Asylum's* price which prevents me from ripping out the rest of the pages.

The real irony here is that issue 30 of Morrison's own *Doom Patrol* explores similar territory in an intriguing and clever manner. It is a joy to read, and costs only £1.00. In fact, for the same money as a copy of DC's edition of *Arkham Asylum*, one can

buy the aforementioned *Doom Patrol* 30, along with far superior Bat-products, *The Killing Joke* and *Gotham By Gaslight*, as well as the latest imported issues of *Hellblazer*, *Sandman*, *Swamp Thing*, *Akira*, *Thor*, *Fantastic Four*, *Doctor Strange* and *Viz* — and still have enough left over to rent a video.

Arkham Asylum is for trendies and masochists only. Beware the sequel!

SLEAZE BROS SLEAZE

Duncan McReady, Sprotsborough, Doncaster, S. Yorkshire

There was such over-kill promotion for Epic/Marvel UK's new monthly *The Sleaze Brothers* that I was really looking forward to reading it. I mean, the whole idea that Marvel UK originated something for their own market, only to have it nicked by Marvel USA's Epic imprint meant it really must be something, right?

So how come it's such a rip-off (or is that part of the intended sleaze-appeal?). I mean, let's look at the page count. How many people actually noticed that instead of the traditional 32 pages per issue, it only has 24 but is still the same price? Do the ads tell us? Certainly not.

But at least we're better off than our American and Canadian cousins with Marvel's baffling currency conversion, which over the years has had a habit of converting everything (from 75¢ to \$2.50 to 50pUK).

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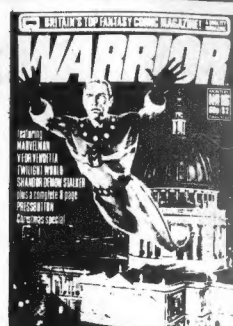
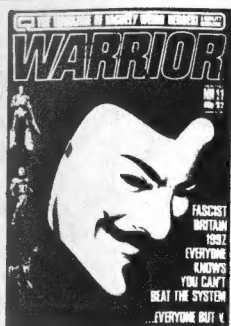
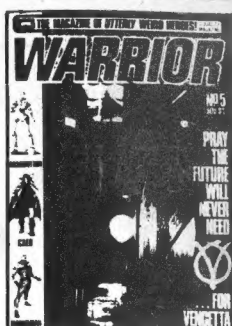
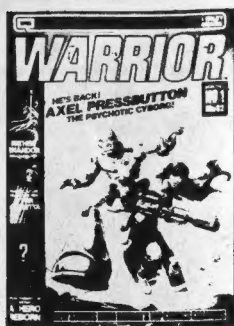
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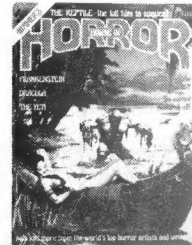
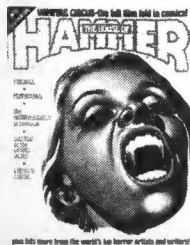
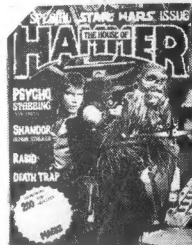
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